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GREAT BRITAIN'S EMBARGO on arms to Japan and China is the logical sequence to the League's action in naming Japan as the aggressor in the Far Eastern conflict. France has indicated a willingness to follow suit provided the United States does likewise. Unfortunately, there seems to be little hope that Washington will accept the logical conclusions of the Stimson doctrine. The resolution which would empower the President to declare an embargo, with other nations, against warring countries is buried in Congress, and there is no indication that the pressure necessary to have it exhumed will be applied. President Hoover and Secretary Stimson have both expressed themselves in favor of the use of the arms embargo against aggressor nations, but the State Department now maintains that an embargo would do little good since Japan is already well supplied. But the way to begin is to begin, especially since the war in the Far East is likely to be protracted. It is further pointed out that the British embargo does not apply to outstanding unfilled contracts. That is a sad fact. It may indicate the real reasons for the coolness of the State Department. The propaganda of the munitions manufacturers was apparently sufficiently powerful to dispose of the arms-embargo resolution. Has it now conquered the State Department? President Roosevelt cannot do better than to inaugurate his Administration with immediate

action. If his first official act were to declare an embargo to be ratified by a special session immediately to be called, it would serve as a most effective warning to the mad militarists of Japan that the United States purposes to uphold the sanctity of treaties and to make effective the most crucial venture in international cooperation since the war.

HUEY LONG has undertaken another filibuster, this time to prevent further investigation of his unsavory role in Louisiana politics. In twelve days the Senate's subcommittee on campaign expenditures, sitting in New Orleans, uncovered a story of political corruption, with the Kingfish at its center, so crude and sensational that it can only be compared with recent Tammany scandals in New York City. The committee has merely scratched the surface, but an additional appropriation is necessary if the investigation is to be continued. The newspaper accounts of the New Orleans hearings are sufficient to indicate that Huey Long's fitness to remain in the Senate is not entirely clear and that the investigation should be completed. Yet apparently there is danger that it will not be. Senator Long, after giving a performance in New Orleans so brazen and so vulgar that he was held in contempt by the committee—and certainly by every self-respecting American who read the tale—rushed back to Washington to head off any further investigation. Anticipating the request for an additional appropriation, Long spent hours of the Senate's precious time deriding the committee and challenging its authority. He made no attempt to defend himself. That is not his method. Instead, he called the inquiry irrelevant, a waste of money, and attempted to discredit the opposing counsel. The audacity of his attack and the failure of Senators Howell and Carey, who conducted the hearings, to reply adequately to it have inclined many Senators, who apparently do not even read the newspapers, to the belief that the inquiry is not important; while Senator Bennett Clark's incomprehensible support of Long has further confused the issue. If one-tenth of the charges brought against Long and Overton are true, neither one of them should be allowed to sit in the United States Senate. Let the investigation proceed.

THE ENDING of the Seventy-second Congress removes from public life, temporarily at least, several indispensable public servants. The defeated Senator who can least be spared is John J. Blaine of Wisconsin. He has fought consistently on the side of progressivism and against the reactionaries in the Senate chamber and in the White House. He has been the sponsor of considerable wise labor legislation. As a member of the judiciary committee, he was instrumental in blocking confirmation of two wretched judicial appointments—those of James Wilkerson of Chicago and Kenneth Mackintosh of Seattle—to the federal bench. He was among the Senate leaders supporting the Norris anti-injunction and Muscle Shoals bills, and the La Follette-Costigan federal relief measure. He was outstanding in the Senate in his willingness to fight, single-handed if need be, against men and measures he deemed objectionable. A cor-

respondingly great loss will be suffered in the House by the absence from the Seventy-third Congress of Representative Fiorello H. La Guardia. For several sessions he has headed the House insurgents. Through his skill as a parliamentary tactician, his oratorical talent and good humor, his indefatigable industry, his complete information on many important issues, and, above all, his thorough awareness of the people's needs, he became the one effective leader the Progressives there have had in twenty years. Others who will be missed are Representatives Thomas R. Amlie of Wisconsin, John E. Nelson of Maine, Burton L. French of Idaho, C. William Ramseyer of Iowa, Robert G. Simmons of Nebraska, and John M. Evans of Montana. Their early return to the public service is a consummation devoutly to be wished.

POPULAR SENTIMENT in favor of recognition of Russia is now overwhelming; only the diehards persist in their irrational opposition. There is evidence in the hands of Senators that William Green does not reflect the views of the rank and file or even of some leaders of the American Federation of Labor when he opposes normal relations with the Soviet Government. The chambers of commerce which formerly turned their backs on a market of 160,000,000 consumers are today in a receptive mood, and the country as a whole is sufficiently anti-Japanese to wish that the new President would make some definite move which would indicate to Tokio our disapproval of its policies in Manchuria. Soviet recognition would make the Japanese sit up and take notice as nothing that has yet happened in Geneva has done. It would immediately bring business from the Soviet Government. The Russians are eager to buy cotton, textiles, copper, and machinery. Hitherto, the apparent obstacles to recognition have been debts and propaganda. As a matter of fact, the Soviet Government has changed its attitude on debts since it first annulled them fifteen years ago; and it has promised on a number of occasions to pay us what, in the opinion of neutral students, it is actually not obliged to pay. Propaganda is a convenient bogey for the demagogue, but it is not a practical issue. Other nations more exposed to the Communist "menace" have relations with Russia and have not succumbed. If this menace exists, perhaps the best way of combating it is to reduce unemployment by attracting Soviet orders. Mr. Roosevelt is said to be considering immediate recognition. It should also be complete recognition. Piecemeal approaches may do much harm. The reason is simple to those who know how Moscow regards the Far Eastern situation.

WHILE THE WESTERN WORLD is at present concerned with what are doubtless more pressing problems, it must not overlook the extremely important treaty recently signed by the Little Entente countries at Geneva. This treaty, though ostensibly another peace agreement, actually constitutes an alliance for war. Heretofore Yugoslavia, Rumania, and Czecho-Slovakia have been held together rather loosely by a series of independent, bilateral agreements limited both in scope and duration. Under the new arrangement they are bound by a single treaty, upon which no time limit is set and which provides for unlimited military, political, and economic cooperation. The three countries will now have a common general staff, cooperative political headquarters at Geneva, and machinery with which to set

up a common economic and financial policy. In short, as one European commentator described it, there has been created "a new Great Power with a population of forty-five million through the virtual consolidation of the states of the Little Entente." Though the countries of the Little Entente probably needed no prompting, it is easy to trace the hand of France in the conclusion of this treaty. Since the failure of its reparations and armaments policies, which were designed to keep Germany in permanent subjugation, France has had to seek some means of offsetting the inevitable resurrection of Germany as a leading military Power. The previous loose alliance of the Little Entente countries would not suffice. Italy was making appreciable progress in its attempt to detach Rumania from this group; Yugoslavia was faced with menacing internal dissensions. It was necessary to hold the Little Entente together by chaining these two countries to Czecho-Slovakia, the only stable and dependable member of the group. This France has now accomplished.

IF POLITICAL STABILITY and economic recovery were the only objectives of this new Balkan confederation, we should be more than happy to welcome it. But obviously it has a much more significant and dangerous goal. The Geneva alliance was born of fear and is likely to have tremendous repercussions, especially in Italy, Hungary, and Germany. Political leaders in these countries are already talking of "reprisals." By this they probably do not mean that they will take hostile action, but that they intend to form an alliance on their own account to oppose the "new Great Power." The Geneva treaty was at least partly inspired by the disclosure of the shipment of 50,000 rifles and 200 machine-guns from Italy to the Hirtenberg munitions factory near Vienna, presumably en route to Hungary. The Hirtenberg incident brought from France, with British approval, a vigorously worded ultimatum addressed to Austria. Had the ultimatum been sent to Rome it doubtless would have provoked a grave situation, for its language led American correspondents to describe it as "an unprecedented and astonishing attack on the sovereign dignity of a friendly Power." Austria is too weak to offer any real resistance, and has promised to return the arms shipment to Italy. The Hirtenberg incident has passed off without serious consequences, but these recent developments in the Balkans reveal how rapidly the temper of Europe is rising.

AS A RESULT of the opinion of Senator Walsh, Attorney-General in the new Administration, that Congress has not the power to prescribe the time, method, or form of the State conventions to ratify the proposed prohibition-repeal amendment, Congress is now unlikely to attempt to pass any legislation on the subject. But there is no reason why it cannot pass a resolution, not binding or mandatory in character, recommending a certain form of convention to the States. This seems highly advisable in view of the bewilderment in some of the States and the chaos of suggestions for procedure. The whole purpose of submitting the proposed repeal to conventions instead of to legislatures was to secure a direct popular verdict on the sole question of prohibition. There should be only two sets of candidates for the conventions: those who unequivocally pledge themselves to vote for the new amendment and those who just as unequivocally pledge themselves to oppose it. A pro and an anti candidate

may be nominated from each Congressional district or from each State-legislature district, as desired; that question is of no importance. What is important is that the candidates should be voted for as a body, by the whole people of the State, and not individually or by districts. Any other method of voting would probably distort the result. The purpose of submitting the repeal of prohibition to conventions was to secure a referendum on the question. Let the referendum be real, and let its results be accurate.

MEANWHILE liquor-control legislation by the States remains to be enacted. New York State has made a beginning with the appointment of a State commission whose first recommendations include local option and the creation of non-paid boards consisting of persons of high character. The commission, in its initial report dealing with non-intoxicating beer, recommends that it be sold in hotels and restaurants but not across a bar—an obvious attempt to forestall the saloon. But why should non-intoxicating beer be denied equality with the oyster or the milk shake, which are now widely sold across the bar? Competitive advertising of the products of brewery and distillery are to be forbidden. Needless to say, the newspapers will not like this. Most interesting of all is the proposed use of a part of the proceeds of liquor taxation for temperance education. The more consumed, the more funds available for inculcating the evil of excessive consumption—the demon rum is to be sentenced to chasing his tail around the stump. The desire of the commissioners to lessen liquor abuses by limiting the profits is apparent and praiseworthy. But is not public ownership the solution most likely to prevent private profiteering and political corruption, and to insure the maximum of control, as well as of revenue, to State and nation?

AMONG THE PROBLEMS with which the new Administration will be immediately confronted is the public debt. An unparalleled situation exists. More than half of the public debt of \$20,907,000,000 matures or is callable this year. The exact amount maturing or callable in the next eleven months is \$11,349,700,000. Ogden Mills has been our most persistent and most eloquent verbal opponent of inflation; but he has been perfectly content to follow an inflationary policy by continuing Mr. Mellon's optimistic system of financing the government by short-term borrowing. As a result of the present artificial and wholly abnormal banking situation, the government has been able to finance itself with this short-term borrowing at remarkably low rates of interest. But to what extent is this low interest being paid for by the possibility of having to pay very much higher interest in the near future if the situation should change either for the better or for the worse? For if the situation changes for the worse, rates may be raised for the government either by a decline in its credit standing or by a compulsion on the part of the banks to sell government securities. If the situation changes for the better, banks will be more anxious to take their funds out of low-interest government securities and lend them out at higher interest to business. In either case the government, which could still float a long-term bond issue at less than 4 per cent interest, will have missed its market. In any case, Mr. Mills, the apostle of sound finance, the great hard-money man, has preferred to leave the whole problem on Mr. Roosevelt's doorstep.

AN ANCIENT STORY relates that a New York newspaper once sent a cub reporter out to cover a flood in the Middle West. After two or three days all the other New York papers began to publish long special accounts of the disaster, but the cub reporter was not heard from. His paper wired him: "Why aren't you sending anything?" The reply came back: "Can't send anything now. Too much excitement." The report of the New York Joint Legislative Committee on Unemployment seems to have been framed on this principle. The committee announces regretfully that it can recommend no unemployment insurance now; that must wait for the slump to lift. It holds that employers cannot now stand the increased burden on pay rolls, that they would be obliged to dismiss employees, who would have to be taken care of by inadequate State funds. This argument appears to have very little substance. If the insurance were of the general type now widely recommended by economists, under which the State contributes nothing while the employee contributes 1 per cent of his weekly pay and the employer 2 per cent of his pay roll, it would increase total pay-roll expenses by only 2 per cent. At most, this could cause the discharge of one man in fifty. If the argument were sound, it could be used equally well in a period of full employment. But even if one were to grant its validity under present circumstances, there would still be no excuse for the committee's failure to recommend the passage of such legislation now, to go into effect immediately in every firm showing a current net profit, and for all firms without exception at some definite later time. It is true that only direct relief can now help those already unemployed; but if we are to get unemployment insurance at all, we must get it while public opinion is aroused in its favor.

The National City Bank Scandal

FOR many years these columns have recorded the wrongdoings of corporation managers, captains of industry, and bank officials, but never a more outrageous abuse of positions of trust or more flagrant misconduct of men in high fiduciary positions than have been laid bare by the testimony of officials of the National City Bank of New York before the Senate Banking Committee. These are strong words; they cannot be too strong. For brazen disregard of the rights of the lawful owners of the bank, of the depositors, and of the public generally, nothing exceeds the confession of Messrs. Mitchell, Rentschler, and Baker. More than that, they have displayed an indecent callousness in the treatment of the lesser employees of their own institution which, with their other performances, marks them as men set apart from their fellows as betrayers of their trust not merely as bankers, but as human beings.

We refer, of course, to the loan in 1929 to themselves by the officers of this bank, the second largest in the world, of the sum of \$2,400,000 to enable them to carry their commitments for the purchase of stock of the bank when the stock-market crash had jeopardized their personal finances. This loan was made without interest to some one hundred of the leading officers of the bank and the affiliated National

City Company, and only in a few cases did these officials offer adequate collateral. Only 5 per cent of it has been repaid. The utterly reprehensible character of this transaction is thrown into clearer light when one adds the deadly fact that these same officers then proceeded to sell out hundreds of the customers of the bank when the collateral advanced to cover their commitments in the stock became inadequate. Moreover, the clerks of the bank, who had been urged, and in some cases really driven, to purchasing the bank stock at 200 or 220 lest they lose the favor of their superior officers, were given, and have been given, no aid whatsoever by the bank in carrying the shares they bought on the instalment plan. On these thousands of them are paying today, with the result that their very existences and those of their families are being jeopardized by these continuing payments for a stock now worth less than \$30 a share—payments which they dare not suspend lest they lose all their savings. No moratorium for them! No loans to help them carry on! Indeed, it was admitted that their only way of getting out of these payments was to give up their jobs. They are just clerks, and the National City Bank has plainly existed not for them or their interest, or for anybody else except the insiders.

The head and front of this offending is Charles E. Mitchell, whose resignation, promptly offered, was promptly accepted by the directors. It now appears that the privilege of having him act as chairman of the bank and of the affiliated National City Company cost the bank in bonuses about \$3,500,000 for the years 1927, 1928, and 1929, in addition to his annual salary of \$25,000. In other words, he drew a salary of nearly \$1,200,000 a year—the President of the United States receives \$75,000 a year for conducting the affairs of the great American nation. As we have said before in the case of President Grace of the Bethlehem Steel Company, no man on earth is worth any such salary and to no man should it be paid. But more interesting things came out about Mr. Mitchell. In 1929 he sold to a member of his family 18,000 shares of his National City Bank stock at a loss of nearly \$2,800,000, which enabled him to avoid paying any income tax whatsoever in the next year. It is this transaction which led Senator Wheeler to remark on the floor of the Senate that if it was right to send Al Capone to Atlanta jail for an income-tax fraud, "some of these crooked bank presidents" should have the same dose administered to them. But Mr. Mitchell's sale of this stock is probably not illegal in a criminal sense. The income-tax authorities have the power, however, to reopen this tax return and to invalidate the sale. It was not a genuine one in open market, since an arrangement existed to buy back the stock at the same price after the requisite period. "That sale was just a sale of convenience to reduce your income tax?" asked Senator Brookhart. "Yes," replied Mr. Mitchell. "It was a sale frankly for that purpose. . . ."

But this does not end the tale of shamelessness. It was brought out that the City Bank, finding itself in 1927 with about \$31,000,000 of worthless Cuban sugar paper on its hands, proceeded to get rid of it in this way: It increased its stock by an issue of \$25,000,000 which it sold for \$50,000,000. Of the latter sum \$25,000,000 went to the National City Company, which then purchased the stock of a newly formed General Sugar Corporation, and this dummy corporation bought the bad paper for the same amount from the National City Bank—only to lose most of the millions in-

volved in that paper. This was high finance, indeed, with the purchasers of the bank stock holding the bag. The value of the stock of every stockholder was lowered by that transaction without their knowledge. Finally there is one more revealing transaction to record. During the 1929 boom market the National City Company sold its City Bank stock short. To quote Mr. Pecora, the counsel for the Senate Banking Committee: "In other words, the company sold shares of bank stock it didn't own or have on hand." More than that, in order to deliver the stock it had sold when there was none in its possession, it borrowed no less than 15,000 shares from our dear old friend, Charles Mitchell, chairman of the bank and company. In other words, it was gambling in its own stock with the aid of its head. Was there ever a worse record of conscienceless manipulation of a great banking institution? The resignations of Messrs. Mitchell and Baker should be followed by those of Mr. Rentschler and all the other officials and directors who had guilty knowledge of or profited by these transactions.

It goes without saying that the Congress of the United States will fail in its duty if, first, it does not find out what the national bank examiners were doing during these years in permitting these things to come to pass, and, secondly, if it does not immediately pass remedial legislation to make impossible the repetition of such scandals, the mere revelation of which has gravely affected an already serious banking situation. How can people have confidence in any bank when such things are disclosed? And why, indeed, should they? We have no doubt that Messrs. Mitchell, Rentschler, and Baker are members of all the hereditary patriotic societies and are anti-Socialist and anti-Communist. All the 87,000 Communist voters who cast their ballots for Mr. Foster at the last election could not in years possibly do as much injury to our institutions and to the capitalist society to which these banking gentlemen are so devoted as they have done by their misconduct as revealed under oath on the witness stand.

The City Bank and the Press

What has been the attitude of our great and variegated metropolitan newspapers toward the National City Bank exposure? Recall the snappy way these defenders of the common weal day by day excoriated in their editorial columns the tin-box artists of Tammany Hall as their malfeasance was bared by Mr. Seabury.

On Tuesday, February 21, before the Senate Banking Committee, Mr. Pecora brought out that Charles E. Mitchell had paid no income tax in 1929 by making a "sale" to a relative and recording a \$2,800,000 loss, and with his fellow-officers had floated \$50,000,000 worth of additional National City capital stock to take care of worthless Cuban sugar liabilities.

Not a line of editorial comment appeared on Wednesday, February 22, in any New York morning or evening paper.

On Wednesday, February 22, Mr. Pecora brought out that the National City officers had lent themselves \$2,400,000 to protect their margin gambling, appropriating this money without security, charging themselves no interest, and subsequently writing most of these loans down or off, at the same time that they sold out their customers and compelled their clerks to continue payments on stock which these lesser fry had bought.

The New York morning and evening newspapers of Thursday, February 23, were as silent as a bank vault on a holiday.

On Thursday, February 23, came the revelation that National City officials had sold their own bank stock short.

And short of editorial comment on Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Rentschler, Mr. Baker, and the National City Bank were the Friday New York morning and evening papers.

On Saturday morning, February 25, appeared the first editorial mention of this aging scandal in—of all papers—the tabloid *News*. Its editorial conclusion, however, was chiefly that “we” were all largely to blame: “We were all trying to get rich without work; we were gambling to get rich by buying stocks on 10 per cent margin”; and the *News* urged banking reform because “we may all go cocoo again.”

Emboldened by the morning tabloid’s audacious stand, Cyrus H. K. Curtis’s New York *Evening Post* on Saturday afternoon leaped into the fray editorially. Bravely it denounced—the Senate! “The Senate, at this session, has done nothing to restore public confidence . . . and has chosen the worst of all possible times to throw further doubt upon banks through the explorations of its banking and currency committee.” The *Post* felt, however, that the Senate’s “revelations . . . cannot be ignored,” and that, alas, “they break the faith of the people in their financial leaders,” and that the revelations “will lead, inevitably, to one more attempt to legislate a new honesty into the banking business.” It then declares: “Legislation cannot do this”; but paradoxically prophesies that “the Glass bill will be the result.” With the *News*, the *Post* feels sure that “like many of the rest of us, some of our bankers were mad enough to do then what they wouldn’t dream of doing now.”

Sunday’s and Monday’s New York *Times* and *Herald Tribune* continued mute. That brave champion of the underdog, William Randolph Hearst, while printing on his *American* editorial page a series of five articles on banking reform in general, appeared stricken with aphasia as far as the National City and its officials were concerned.

But surely the fearless and progressive Scripps-Howard *World-Telegram* had something to say! When, indeed, was that gallant palladium of our purses silent on corruption? On Wednesday, February 22, it had an editorial on “Tammany Boldness.” On Thursday it attacked “Furniture Grafting” in the city administration. On Friday it denounced “Fixers in the Municipal Court.” On Saturday it roundly spanked S. Howard Cohen of the Board of Elections. On Monday, February 27, it came out editorially against “Multiple Job Holding.” The reader’s eye, on this day also, would gravitate to an editorial headed “Bar the Speculators.” But they were not the speculators of 55 Wall Street; they were only those of the Wallabout Market, Brooklyn. There was also an editorial on “Bank Action.” But that was merely a comment on the signing of the Couzens national-banking law.

To sum up, in five days the New York *Times*, the *Herald Tribune*, the *American*, the *Evening Journal*, the *Sun*, and the *World-Telegram*—all those great molders of public opinion—have had no opinion on the largest bank scandal under their noses since the failure of the Bank of United States. It all recalls that ancient music-hall quip: “If you steal \$25, you’re a thief. If you steal \$250,000, you’re an embezzler. If you steal \$2,500,000, you’re a financier.”

A Farewell to Republicans

AT the risk of gilding the tinsel, let the record be set down finally as *The Nation* takes leave this week of the “only party fit to rule.” American memories are short. Four years from now the public will be asked to restore the Republicans and prosperity.

Let it therefore be recalled, now and henceforth, that four years ago not a cloud even as large as a man’s hand had appeared in the heavens. That it was, from the financial standpoint, a clear blue sky may have had a certain prophetic symbolism which was overlooked at the time. Herbert Hoover was about to assume the Presidency. His predecessor, Calvin Coolidge, in his valedictory message to Congress, had declared:

No Congress of the United States ever assembled, on surveying the state of the Union, has met with a more pleasing prospect than that which appears at the present time. . . . The requirements of existence have passed beyond the standard of necessity into the region of luxury. Enlarging production is consumed by an increasing demand at home and an expanding commerce abroad. The country can regard the present with satisfaction and anticipate the future with optimism.

There was no difference of opinion, no variation in optimism between the retiring and incoming helmsmen of the nation. In his acceptance address the previous August Mr. Hoover had declared:

We in America today are nearer to the final triumph over poverty than ever before in the history of any land. The poorhouse is vanishing from among us. We have not yet reached the goal, but, given a chance to go forward with the policies of the last eight years, and we shall soon, with the help of God, be in sight of the day when poverty will be banished from this nation. There is no guaranty against poverty equal to a job for every man. That is the primary purpose of the economic policies we advocate.

And having achieved office on the basis of this premise and promise, President Hoover reiterated his faith in his inaugural message:

Ours is a land . . . filled with millions of happy homes, blessed with comfort and opportunity. . . . In no nation are the fruits of accomplishment more secure. . . . I have no fears for the future of our country. It is bright with hope.

There is no need to set down once more the repeated mistaken prophecies which issued from the White House as the country sank deeper into economic chaos. Those forecasts were sufficiently quoted during the recent Presidential contest. But Mr. Hoover’s record as a false prophet continued consistent to the end. Throughout the campaign he asserted that his Administration was achieving victory over the depression. In Cincinnati, on October 28, 1932, he said: “. . . we have succeeded in defeating these forces. We have protected our institutions and our people. We have now transformed those measures into an attack on this depression all along the line.” Speaking at Des Moines of the farmers’ plight, he declared: “Happily, we have won this battle.” And at Indianapolis, on October 29, he said:

I pointed out there [at Detroit] that the battle has now changed from successful defense of our country from disaster and chaos to forward-marching attack on one hundred fronts, through a score of instrumentalities and weapons toward recovery. Since that time I have further positive evidence showing that the measures and policies we have set up are driving the forces of this depression into retreat with constantly increasing rapidity.

At St. Paul, on November 6, he stated, as he had earlier in the campaign, that a million men had returned to work in the preceding four months, and were returning at the rate of half a million a month, adding, "Every business index shows some progress somewhere in the nation." And in his final address, broadcast from Elko, Nevada, on the eve of the election, he expressed the hope that the American people would "realize the great crisis we have successfully passed," and contrasted the opposition's "mirage of promises" with his party's "reality of facts."

It is needless to stress the hollowness of these final promises and assertions. Unemployment mounts—thirteen million men out of work is today a conservative estimate; a 3.9 per cent drop in employment with a 5 per cent pay-roll decrease was recorded for the month ending January 15, according to the latest Department of Labor statistics available. The people's savings continue to be confiscated as banks close at an undiminished pace—272 closed in the month of January, 1933, and toward the close of February they closed, no longer singly, but by States—Michigan, Maryland, Ohio. Bankruptcy is becoming epidemic. The private and local relief upon which Mr. Hoover's policies relied are increasingly inadequate; destitution, undernourishment, actual hunger are spreading through the land.

But we are taking leave not merely of a single Administration. For twelve years the Republican Party has been in power. During ten of those years it controlled the executive and legislative branches of the government. When, a few years hence, an attempt is made to minimize the disaster of this last quadrennium, and to point to a preceding eight-year period of material development and growth, let it be noted that in a purely material sense the American people are much worse off today than they were twelve years ago. Far more than was gained has been swept away. Savings have been dissipated, lives have been blasted, families disintegrated. Misery and insecurity exist to a degree unprecedented in our national life. And spiritually the American people have been debauched by the materialism which made dollar-chasing the accepted way of life and accumulation of riches the goal of earthly existence. The record of Republicanism must be judged as a whole, although, in fairness, the consequences of the World War and the major responsibility of the Democrats for putting the United States into it must not be forgotten. The Republicans were as eager to make war—and both parties continued, until well after the crash, to be proud of their attitude in 1917. Moreover, economic disaster has been only a part of this sterile decade's legacy, the burdens of which will descend to unborn generations. Our worthiest traditions have been impaired; vital tenets of American life have been destroyed. What has become of that fundamental American axiom "salvation by work"? In all our previous history it has been taken for granted that ours was a land of opportunity, and that rewards bore some relation to initiative, effort, and ability. Granting the large mythical content of

these beliefs, they were more nearly valid in America in the first century and a half of our national existence than anywhere else on earth. They are no longer true today. The promise of American life has been shattered—possibly beyond repair.

Shall we assume that the Democrats, who now take office, offer a better prospect for America? The indicated liberalism of Roosevelt in the present desperate emergency, his power policy, more enlightened than any we have yet had, his nomination of a Cabinet superior to any within a generation, his apparent determination to tread new paths, are auguries of hope. But we should not forget certain fundamentals which *The Nation* has often reiterated: In recent times, certainly, the two major parties have been as like as peas, sterile, guided by approximately the same economic philosophy, motivated by the same quest for legal—and some not so legal—loot.

If the thievery of the "Ohio gang"—never atoned for by the Republicans—was wholly a party scandal, it is evident that, considerable as were those peculations, they were trifling beside the legalized plundering which has ever been non-partisan. Behind the Administration façade, capped by the genial and banal Harding, the insignificant Coolidge, and the erstwhile superman, Hoover, have been the real rulers of America, some of whom Mr. Gerard identified in his famous list three years ago. They have included Samuel Insull, always a buyer-in to both parties; his friends and creditors, Owen D. Young and Gerard Swope; Charlie Dawes, also a friend of Lorimer; Charles E. Mitchell of the National City Bank, whose latest performances are discussed elsewhere in this issue; Albert H. Wiggin of the Chase National Bank, whose tale is still to be told; Mr. Mellon of the Colombian oil loans, the recipient, through Will Hays, of Mr. Sinclair's Continental Oil bonds, aluminum monopolist, and the greatest refunder of taxes to the wealthy since before Alexander Hamilton; Eugene G. Grace, Charlie Schwab's million-dollar-bonus boy; Leonor F. Loree, buyer for his private account of Missouri, Kansas, and Texas stock to be unloaded on his company stockholders; George W. Hill, president of the American Tobacco Company, who, only after a blistering Supreme Court opinion rendered in a stockholder's suit, returned 13,440 shares of stock which, upon his own recommendation, had been given him. It was a Grand Old Party—for them—while it lasted. Makers and beneficiaries of our politico-economic system, these are the men whose failure is now written large in the towering empty edifices that scrape the New York sky, in the hundreds of thousands of "For sale" and "To let" signs which adorn our cities, in the closed banks, in the foreclosed farms, in the whole picture of devastation which has come under their rule.

Have these captains and kings departed—not to return? The epoch of their wanton and repulsive leadership is ending. Their incompetence and their betrayal are manifest. But much of the evil they have done lives after them. The coming years will see the struggle to purge America, to reassert the promise of American life, to validate, in consonance with the changed times and conditions, the high aspirations of the founders of the nation. Mr. Roosevelt has the opportunity to be the leader of this renaissance, but he will have to forge as his instrument a wholly different Democratic Party from that which so long has been indistinguishable from the Republican.

A Good Cabinet

MR. ROOSEVELT has chosen an excellent Cabinet. We say this with full realization that there are weak spots in it, that there is only faint approval of it in Democratic circles in Washington, and that the conservative elements generally fear that it is weak. In the *New York Times* we find a plaint that it does not include men like Newton D. Baker, John W. Davis, Norman Davis, or Owen D. Young, and a reference to the men who formed part of the recent Republican Cabinets, such as Hughes, Stimson, and Kellogg. Well, one of the reasons why we like the new Cabinet is that it is happily free from the leftovers of the Wilson Administration, the "strong men" who have long since grown stale in the public eye, not one of whom has given the slightest indication of any ability to cope with the present crisis, or of having freed himself from the prejudices of a bygone generation of public men.

Senator Walsh's selection as Attorney-General puts at the head of that department for the first time in much more than a decade a man who is not a reactionary and a trusted friend of the "interests," but a relentless and brilliant prosecutor. In his handling of the oil frauds he showed that no power could prevent his going to the bottom of those scandals. As for the new Secretary of the Interior, Harold L. Ickes, it is hard to see how there could be a better choice. The press has dwelt upon his connection with the Bull Moose movement in 1912; far more important is the fact that he has been for years in the forefront of all reform movements in Chicago. With superb courage he told the truth about Samuel Insull in the year 1930, when that noble Athenian was still the greatest figure in his community, and declared that Insull, more than anyone else, was responsible for Chicago's vice and crime. These were his words:

Chicago is not suffering from a breakdown of government, but from a super-government. The name of Chicago's super-government is Samuel Insull. By contributing lavishly to the coffers of both parties, and by exerting his influence in other ways, he has gradually assumed control of the parties. He dominates the business community through his tremendous power. The press apparently fears to attack him. . . . The same public officials who have furnished protection to Insull's public utilities have also furnished protection to racketeers, bootleggers, and professional killers. . . . Thus we have a city administration with the under-world and over-world in dual control.

There spoke a man of just the type we need in the Cabinet in this national emergency.

The appointment of Frances Perkins to the Department of Labor is equally a cause for profound jubilation. The first woman to enter the Cabinet, she is a tried executive and public official, with a national reputation for efficiency, integrity, and courage. Her appointment renders a service to the working men and women of America, organized and unorganized, that can hardly be measured.

For Cordell Hull we have the highest respect. He has for years fought tariff excesses almost single-handed in Congress with great ability and a clear understanding of the principles involved. He is therefore well equipped to nego-

tiate the indispensable international agreements upon which world recovery in no small measure depends. While he has not figured in foreign affairs, he is a student of problems that come before him, a dispassionate searcher after facts. He is, moreover, free from entangling alliances with financial groups with special interests to promote—groups which have so often in the past made the State Department the instrument of their acquisitive purposes in Latin America.

For William H. Woodin, the Secretary of the Treasury, as much, unfortunately, cannot be said. He is a big business man who has displayed few qualities that indicate his fitness for the difficult task ahead. The great corporations which he dominates—engaged chiefly in the manufacture of transportation equipment—have a history depressingly like that of other similar enterprises. They made large profits for the insiders, first, through the manufacture of war materials, then in the post-war boom. But Mr. Woodin's direction displayed no more foresight than the prevailing type of business leadership; his companies overexpanded extravagantly, with the inevitable consequences. Moreover, Mr. Woodin's Cuban connections are unfortunate. Controlling several Cuban companies, he is hand in glove with Machado, whose present Ambassador to the United States is not merely an official of Mr. Woodin's companies, but his right-hand man and trusted confidant. Mr. Roosevelt will have to be on his guard here, and also with respect to Daniel C. Roper, his Secretary of Commerce, who has recently been engaged in representing Cuban sugar interests in the capital. Mr. Roper has the reputation of being a good executive, but his appointment cannot be looked on as anything else than a political recognition of William G. McAdoo's services at the Democratic convention in making possible Roosevelt's nomination.

The other Cabinet posts are relatively unimportant. The nation is engaged in a great domestic war, and we can therefore be reconciled to the naming of Senator Swanson to the Secretaryship of the Navy. His promotion will strengthen the Senate, since it will remove him from the important chairmanship of the Committee on Foreign Relations, to which he would have succeeded under the Senate seniority rule. Moreover, his Senate seat will very probably be filled by former Governor Harry F. Byrd of Virginia, a stronger and better man. Ex-Governor Derr of Utah was undoubtedly given the Secretaryship of the War Department in political recognition of the far West. It remains for him to prove his worth. The Postmastership has, of course, gone to James A. Farley, following a custom—which as such cannot be other than deplored—of thus rewarding purely political services.

Taken as a whole, this Cabinet represents an enormous improvement over those of preceding Administrations. It contains far abler and more enlightened department heads than we have had in a generation. Moreover, it is the general spirit of the Cabinet which counts, and since it will be dominated by Mr. Roosevelt, we cannot but feel that, as a whole, it will be progressive and forward-looking and able to grapple intelligently with the crisis which confronts the country.



THE END OF AN ERA

Issues and Men

And a Woman—Frances Perkins

REALLY, the news that Frances Perkins is to be appointed to the Cabinet of the United States is one of the most inspiring and encouraging events of recent years. My mind is running far back as I write. I am thinking of the pioneers who first declared that woman was man's equal in all respects and as such entitled not only to vote but to hold any office within the gift of the American people. How they were derided, how they were laughed at, how they were subjected to vile abuse, and even physical assault! No one can realize what such sensitive and lovely women as Lucy Stone and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Angelina Grimké, Lucretia Mott, and many others had to suffer when first they dared to take part in the anti-slavery and woman-suffrage agitation nearly one hundred years ago. Indeed, the famous "broadcloth mob" which dragged William Lloyd Garrison through the streets of Boston with a rope around his waist was roused to violence as much by the fact that a group of Boston women had so unsexed themselves as to organize an anti-slavery society and hold a public meeting as by the fact that the society was to be addressed by an English agitator for human rights, George Thompson. Indeed, in 1840 the first World's Anti-Slavery Convention in London refused to seat the American "female delegates" on the ground that for any woman to take part in a public meeting was improper and degrading to the sex!

I remember, too, in later years, the first parade for woman's suffrage held in New York City in which men took part. I was one of the eighty-five members of the sterner sex who were booed and hissed and asked: "Did your wife make you do it?" all the way down Fifth Avenue to Washington Square. Not one of us was sure then that we would live to see the enfranchisement of women, much less be present to rejoice when a woman took her seat in the Cabinet room of the White House. Here is a lost cause no longer lost, but come to triumphant success, and if the pioneers of that cause are looking down upon this scene, there will be rejoicing in heaven on the fourth day of March. And this rejoicing should be doubly vociferous because of the character and achievements of Frances Perkins herself. These the editors of *The Nation* are treating elsewhere. I can only add my "me, too." But I am particularly pleased that Frances Perkins is a Lucy Stoner—in other words, she has kept her maiden name although happily married and the mother of a most promising daughter. In this hour of depression when the pernicious doctrine is being preached that married women should be debarred from employment by the local, State, and federal governments if there happens to be a husband or another male member of the family who is also working, it is wonderful, indeed, to have Franklin Roosevelt pick not only an extraordinarily able woman of proved ability in public office, but one whose husband is also a wage-earner. That ought to stop a great deal of the mischievous propaganda which could only work infinite harm if it should lead to the adoption of this proposal as a nation-wide policy. No State has the right to deny a woman a job, not even in times

of unemployment, if she wants it, has earned it, and is capable of doing it well. Here we have another one of those real issues of personal liberty that ought never to be abridged by sex, or race, or color.

I am so bold as to believe also that the new President has set an example which will be followed in the years to come as a matter of course, as it has been the custom ever since the coming of suffrage to give women their place on the national party committees. No one thinks that that unsexes them; no one now thinks that the women orators in the national conventions are out of place, or the women delegates on the floor. No one maintains that the women governors who have been chosen have suffered thereby—"Ma" Ferguson, I fancy, is just about the same woman that she was when she first became Governor. I admit that we have had several unfortunate cases, notably one in New York State, in which women office-holders have played us false. But we have no right to expect women in office to be more upright than men similarly placed; we can only hope that they will do better than the men. But whether they do or not, a share in the actual management of our State and national businesses is their inalienable right. So I should not be surprised if every succeeding Cabinet hereafter had one or more women in it. Certainly, if a Republican Administration should succeed Mr. Roosevelt's, it would be hard for it not to "recognize the women voters" in this way.

But after all, I come back to the fact that we need not worry the least bit about this first woman Cabinet member. Her attractive personality, her strength of character, her devotion to the truth which made her leap to the exposure of the misleading statistics of unemployment given out by Mr. Hoover's Administration, all give no room for question as to what her record will be. Also she is a forward-looking person, in touch with all reform movements, sympathetic to social control and social responsibility. It will be wonderful to have her in the place of the incredible Mr. Doak, and of the money-grabbing former Secretary of Labor, the present Senator from Pennsylvania, James J. Davis, who is now awaiting trial upon an indictment for misusing the mails. Those were "professional" labor men. They served the cause of labor and their country just about as badly as possible. They stood for hatred, bitterness, bigoted intolerance, and narrow-minded and cruel interpretation of the labor and immigration laws. When I think of Frances Perkins's point of view and attitude, her humanity, wisdom, and statesmanship, it seems to me that she will be an angel at the Cabinet table in contrast with the sordidness and the inhumanity of her predecessors. I, for one, pledge myself here and now never to cease to be grateful to Franklin Roosevelt for this brave and just and wise action—no matter what fate may have in store for him and his Administration.

Frances Perkins

The Farmer Learns Direct Action

By FERNER NUHN

A RAW, chilly day. The yard of the farm, churned black in a previous thaw, is frozen now in ruts and nodes. Where the boots of the farmers press, a little slime of water exudes, black and shiny. Through a fence the weather-bleached stalks of corn, combed and broken by the husking, stand ghostly in the pale air. The farm buildings—machine-shed, chicken-houses, pig-houses, corncribs—sprawl and gather again in the big, hip-roofed red barn, and strike a final accent in the thrust of the tiled silo. The farm is kempt and has a going air; there is nothing run down about it. The fields spread away, picking up other farm clusters sections off—remote, separate, dim under the big gray sky. One feels the courage of the isolate units, each swinging its big segment of earth. Perhaps they call for too much; perhaps the independence is doomed; but something of worth will be gone if it goes.

There are 300 farmers here. It is a Quaker community, long established, conservative. The farmers are mostly middle-aged, very workaday in overalls, sagging sweaters, mud-stained boots. They talk quietly in their slow, concrete manner, move about little.

They are neighbors of a farmer who can no longer pay interest on a \$2,000 mortgage. These farmers have known him for years; they know he would pay if he could. They know the debt and the interest are three times as hard to pay off now as when the mortgage was given. Some of them know that soon their own property may be endangered by defaults. They know that this particular mortgage was given on stock, and that the farmer has offered the stock in settlement. And they know that the mortgagee refused the offer, demanded a sale instead—a sale of personal property, as provided by law.

The mortgagee stands off at one side, with his attorney. They are talking with the auctioneer. The farmers look that way once in a while, and while their glances are not friendly, they show no open animosity. The auctioneer comes away. Some farmers surround him; they want to be reassured that no household goods will be put on sale. The auctioneer reassures them. The farmers nod grimly; that much has been accomplished anyway. There are no leaders, no harangues, no organization. In fact, this is the first affair of the sort in the county.

There is a movement toward the barns. The auctioneer mounts a wagon. The first thing offered is a mare. It is rather strange that live stock is offered first; the usual order is machinery first. The defaulting farmer stands silent holding the mare; he is a man almost elderly, quiet, staid-appearing; and he stands embarrassed, smoothing the mane of the mare. The auctioneer goes through his regular cry. The mare is sixteen years old, sound except for a wire cut and a blue eye. What is he offered, what is he offered, does he hear a bid? He tries to make it sound like an ordinary sale. But the crowd stands silent, grim. At last someone speaks out. Two dollars. Two dollars! Unheard of, unbelievable, why she's worth twenty times that!

The silence of the farmers is like a thick wall. The

rigmarole of the auctioneer beats against it, and falls back in his face. The farmer holding the mare stands with his head hanging. At last, without raising his eyes, he says, "Fifteen dollars." This is a new and distressing business to him, and he is ashamed to make a bid of less than that.

"... do I hear a twenty, a twenty, a twenty? Why, she's worth twice that much." The auctioneer is still going through the make-believe. He keeps it up for five more minutes. A pause, and a voice speaks out. "Sell her." It is not loud, but there is insistence in it, like the slice of a plow, with the tractor-pull of the crowd reinforcing it. The auctioneer hesitates, gives in. The silent, waiting crowd is too much. "Sold." After that there is less make-believe. Three more horses are offered. They are knocked down to the farmer, with no other bids, for ten dollars, eight dollars, a dollar and a half. The farmer is learning. The machinery comes next. A hay rack, a wagon, two plows, a binder, rake, mower, disc-harrow, cultivator, pulverizer. A dollar, fifty cents, fifty cents, a quarter, a half a dollar. Sold to the farmer. His means of livelihood are saved to him.

That night there is a meeting in the country chapel. It is a strange affair; nothing like this has happened in this community before. To conspire against the law! It amounts to that. To obstruct legal justice! There is an anxious, almost a bewildered look on the faces of the farmers. But it isn't justice, even if it's legal! So the debate goes on. Ten-cent corn to pay seventy-five-cent debts; a quarter, perhaps almost a third, of all Iowa farms lost to their original owners in the last seven years for inability to meet obligations.

But there is something more than economics involved. A faith, a dream, is involved, and the jeopardy of it shows in their faces as they talk. A dream of land, of freeholders of the land, self-determining workers of the piece of earth they own. And now—47 per cent of the actual farmers of land in Iowa, richest land in the country, are not owners, but tenants. The proportion is steadily increasing. Many of the less resolute farmers have given up the idea of self-respecting, profitable farming, are resigning themselves to the thought of "a bare living on the land." The shadow of peasantry hangs over them.

But a dream does not die easily. Heat generates from it even in this conservative audience. Old phrases are spoken, spoken with a new meaning. "Justice above the law." "The Boston Tea Party." "The right to save our homes." Someone describes the affair of the afternoon. The farmers cannot help being pleased at its success. It is a taste of direct action. They organize to use it more effectively.

Another county, the county seat. Trucks, Fords, muddy vehicles of all kinds have been pouring into the small town all morning. There is a big empty space of pavement in front of the courthouse, with "No parking" signs. The farmers carefully park their cars down side streets. They gather in the courthouse, in the corridors, on the steps. A young farmer lounges near the door with a coil of rope nonchalantly hung on his arm.

Nothing happens. A sheriff's sale is expected, with the probability of a deficiency judgment, but the creditor's party does not arrive. The gathering is sponsored by the Farmers' Holiday Association. There are 1,000 farmers here. There is organization. Leaders stand up on radiators in the corridors and talk. Make the dollar complete its circuit through the pockets of the big boys, the big-moneyed men, and get back to the producers. Until the American farmer rears up on his hind legs and demands cost of production, we are headed for the poorhouse as fast as we can go. Laws and the Constitution are meant to serve men, and when they cease to do that, the laws should be trampled on.

Still nothing happens. Early in the afternoon the sheriff announces that the sale has been called off. It is just as well—for the plaintiff. He hardly wanted to carry on his action in the midst of the thousand farmers. A settlement has been reached out of court. There is little applause. The farmers listen a bit grimly, then slowly disperse and go back to their farms. But they have accomplished their purpose.

These are fair samples of farmers' direct action as it has been going on in the Middle West in recent months. Those who deprecated the Farmers' Holiday movement of last summer as a futile gesture should consider the present development, for it is a direct outgrowth of that movement, finding its precedents and methods in it. The general movement has had a number of results. It has called attention to the plight of the farmer; it has had real success as a method of dealing with specific debt actions; it is hastening legislative action along the whole line of agricultural problems; it is resulting in organization of farmers, extensive and intensive, such as perhaps has no parallel in history; and it is giving farmers a significant training in direct action.

The success of the protest gatherings (which apparently reached a peak in the Middle West in the first part of January, when perhaps a dozen or a score were taking place daily, though the movement has continued since and spread south and west) has been due, in part, to a general fairness of attitude which has kept public opinion with the farmers. Conciliation is tried first. Committees have been acting in many counties to investigate complaints or prospective actions with a view to compromising debts with fairness to both parties. The number of compromises has probably been greater than that of the sale protests. Nor will the farmers' organizations act to stop foreclosures when it is apparent that a member seeks advantage for himself. Farmers at Villisca, Iowa, have even acted to readjust a forced settlement which they felt was unfair to a mortgagee. Conciliation failing, the common practice in a forced sale is to save only chattels and machinery and working stock—the means of livelihood; grain and market stock are freely offered. The intention is to give the farmer a chance to start over again, and not let him be stripped and thrown upon the county.

The chief weapon of the farmer, in his protests, has been simply man power—sheer weight of corporate presence and purpose. Frequently a few lengths of rope are at hand; nooses have been dangled; but it is doubtful if the ropes would ever be used except as threat. In Nebraska the cold water in a horse tank was invoked, but not used, to silence an unwelcome bidder. Intimidation has been used semi-privately. Sheriffs "doing their duty" have been locked in cells, or in brooder houses.

A final weapon is boycott—social and economic. Landlords who have succeeded in removing a tenant are apt to find it hard to place another one on their land. Farming is so much a communal affair that the new tenant can hardly get along without the good-will of his neighbors and their help in silage and threshing. No trucker will haul for him. Usually he does not stay. A farm near Shelby, Minnesota, has been idle for a year; another in Iowa for two years.

Of actual gun play and violence there has been very little on the part of the farmers. In Kansas, however, a real-estate dealer was killed during January after foreclosing a mortgage on a farm, by persons so far not designated. In Wisconsin, Iowa, and elsewhere guns have been used by homestead owners to prevent sheriffs from attaching their property. And at Sioux City recently farm pickets, in a continuation of the local milk war, engaged in a gun battle with truckers in which a number of men were wounded, one fatally. This last incident, while only indirectly related to the debt-protest movement, comes closest to a use of firearms by organized farmers.

But aside from the exceptional violence it is patent that every protested sale, however orderly, has violated the law. State Attorney Good of Nebraska, in a "law and order" statement which hardly recognized the realities of the farm situation, was nevertheless technically right, no doubt, in declaring courts could hold sales void in which bidding was obstructed. Courts, however, have *not* been voiding such sales. Local judges and sheriffs have done a good deal of nodding, blinking, and looking the other way. The farmer, threatened with losing his home and his livelihood, has set rights up against legalities—and legalities have yielded.

To give a decent form to such yielding has now become the worried affair of legislatures and courts. Governors Schmedeman of Wisconsin and Herring of Iowa made the first move with proclamations asking forbearance in foreclosures. By February 7 the Iowa legislature had passed an act which has apparently become the pattern for legislation of the sort—an act intrusting district courts with distributing rents, incomes, and profits of real estate susceptible to foreclosure toward the claim of taxes, mortgages, and insurance, according to a certain priority, until March 1, 1935. Mortgagee or mortgagor may present a demand for court custody. Similar moratoriums, with varying time limits, were passed or are pending in Kansas, South and North Dakota, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Idaho. Deficiency judgments were the target of legislation in various States. North Dakota and Michigan acted to save property involved in tax delinquency. In a notable decision the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled that the value of land may not be measured by current purchase bids—a ruling which will allow courts to forestall deficiency judgments. These acts and bills—radical enough, it would seem, as against the sanctity of contracts—indicate the purpose of debt legislation. Two points may be considered. They aim mostly at postponement, and they would treat debt problems individually. This latter condition means that a terrific burden will be thrown on the courts. Other borrowers will be heard from, for the farmer carries only a fraction of the total debts, even on real estate. However, such legislation may avert mob action during the periods designated.

But it is clear, since such legislation only continues debts, that it merely gambles on the hope that prices will rise and

the farmer be able to clear his own obligations within two or three years. The hope seems hardly warranted. It seems very unlikely that an upswing, even if it comes, will rise to such levels that the huge burden of debt can be met on terms at all comparable to the terms under which it was contracted. Consequently, with human rights of borrowers somewhat recognized as they are now, we are quite certain to enter an era of creditor deflation, with real scaling down of debts, or money inflation, in the offing.

Meanwhile the farmer continues to organize. The Holiday movement of last summer, the sale protests of this winter, are only items in a series of possible resorts to direct action. The growth of the Farmers' Union, sponsor of the Holiday and most militant of farm organizations, under such

leaders as Milo Reno, is a sign of the times. The names of local units under its wing are suggestive: Council of Defense, Loyal Order of Picketers, The Modern Seventy-sixers. Its aims, as voiced, for instance, by the highly integrated Woodbury County, Iowa, association, are arresting: "To pay no taxes, permit no foreclosures, stay on the farm until we receive cost of production." Its tactics are patterned after those of militant labor unionism: the combining of members for purposes of strike and embargo. Some concentrated groups, such as milk producers, have already shown formidable bargaining power.

At any rate, the farmer is not taking the threat of loss of ownership of his land lying down. He has tasted direct action. He may use it more drastically.

South America Turns to War

By SAMUEL GUY INMAN

"THE struggle between Bolivia and Paraguay over the Chaco jungle reminds me of two bald-headed men fighting over a comb," said a Frenchman recently. But South American countries are, of course, only imitating France, England, the United States, and other civilized nations that have been struggling to control the deserts and jungles of North Africa, Mesopotamia, and Nicaragua.

"To whom does the Chaco really belong?" I asked a diplomat in Buenos Aires who had long studied South American questions. "To the Indians," he replied. And thereby hangs a tale. The disputed boundaries were never clearly determined in the old colonial days or in those of the republics. There was no urgency in the matter until oil and rubber and mahogany and bananas and coffee and cacao and other products that the rich industrialists wanted were discovered in these jungles. Then the disputes flared up. Governments heretofore bankrupt began to spruce up with money borrowed from foreigners who were promised a part of the riches sure to come from the newly discovered resources.

Leticia, for instance, is a little hamlet in a great stretch of jungle where Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, and Brazil come together. The airplane and other instruments of modern life begin to penetrate this hitherto unknown section, and the modern spirit of commerce seizes the inhabitants. A few dozen Peruvians take the town from even fewer Colombians, who had supposed that the Colombian flag was rightly flying there. There follows an international incident. Argentina, "soundest of all South American nations," has a revolution following financial excesses; Uruguay seems too friendly to one of the participants, and diplomatic relations are broken. Brazil overborrows, the internal strain is too great, old political rivalries flare up, and a devastating revolution breaks out, undoing all the political and economic progress of four decades. Chile's administrations sell out her nitrate to a few foreigners and nationals, and drive the common people to desperation, revolution, and chaos. And the last few weeks bring reports that Uruguay, with the most progressive legislation of all American countries, is split hopelessly between the two executive divisions of the government, the President and the newly created Executive Council—a division also caused by economic conditions resulting partly from overborrowing.

Every country in South America is touchy, jumpy, so nervous that any little incident may bring far-reaching results. There has been too much foreign money, too much high finance connected with dictatorial governments. Fascism, not communism, is the great danger in South America, as elsewhere.

The present tension is a hang-over from the series of revolutions in 1930 and 1931, the explanations of which have now become fairly clear. During the World War Latin America was immensely impressed with the power of the machine, and many of its leaders came to believe that rapid material development was essential. At the same time the United States became a creditor nation instead of a debtor, and began searching for places for the investment of its enormous surplus of capital. These two circumstances were mainly responsible for the development of a new type of dictator who looked upon his country as an undeveloped piece of real estate; only money was needed for modernization. The newly appointed agents of the North American bankers assured him that there would be no difficulty about that—providing he would give them sufficiently tight mortgages.

United States investments in Latin America at the beginning of the World War amounted to \$1,242,000,000. In 1929, on the eve of the stock-market crash in New York, they amounted to \$5,587,494,100. Consider the enormous influence of these investments in some of the more backward countries, industrially speaking. In Colombia only \$2,000,000 of American money was invested in 1913; in 1929 the amount had grown to \$260,000,000. Within the same sixteen years these investments, including commercial enterprises and loans to governments, had risen in Peru from \$35,000,000 to \$150,000,000; in Chile from \$15,000,000 to \$550,000,000; in Bolivia from \$10,000,000 to \$133,000,000; in Brazil from \$20,000,000 to \$476,000,000; in Argentina from \$40,000,000 to \$611,000,000.

As long as the strong man can borrow funds to carry out an active program of public works and can keep the support of the army and his friends by awarding contracts and other favors to them, he is likely to hold power. But when a great economic crisis occurs, not only the political malcontents but the growing democratic elements opposed to such dictatorships have opportunity to assert themselves. That is what

happened in Latin America. Dictators, like stocks, tumbled after the Wall Street debacle in 1929—Leguía in Peru, Siles in Bolivia, Irigoyen in Argentina, Ibañez in Chile, Washington Luis in Brazil, Ayar in Ecuador.

These countries are now facing not only the general world depression but enormous charges for foreign debts. Currency is everywhere depreciated and the process continues. Since the dictators made no preparation for democracy, one finds all over Latin America at the present time revolution, militarism, and international strife. And along with this fresh crop of militarism, some of the old boundary disputes have been resurrected. A foreign war, as the imperialists discovered long ago, diverts attention from troubles at home.

The boundary question between Bolivia and Paraguay has existed for a century, but it was only when petroleum concessions and colonizing privileges were granted to American and British corporations and extensive loans were made by bankers of those countries to Bolivia that the question became acute. Large sums were spent in England and the United States for bombing planes and other war material, and General Kundt of the German army was engaged to modernize the Bolivian war machine. The country rose against the dictator Siles in 1930 and he and General Kundt had to flee for their lives. But the military elements were well entrenched and were soon again in the saddle. An undeclared war was launched in the Chaco in the summer of 1932, for which it seems impossible to fix the blame, since squads of Bolivian and Paraguayan soldiers were constantly colliding in the undefined territory. At the close of the year General Kundt was recalled from Germany to carry out the plans he had made earlier for a drive to the Paraguay River.

The need felt by Bolivia for an outlet through the Paraguay River to the Atlantic has been intensified since Chile and Peru in 1929 settled the old question of Tacna and Arica, dividing the two provinces between themselves and leaving Bolivia without access to the Pacific, such as she had before her war with Chile. Recent economic developments originating overseas have further intensified the need. By 1926 the Standard Oil Company had secured control of 3,613,454 acres of land in the lowlands near the Chaco. A British syndicate, with a plan for railways and a port on the Paraguay River, was granted an immense section of land, totaling 50,000,000 acres, also in lowlands. (This whole scheme soon failed because of bad management and stock manipulations.) In 1922 high financing began with the floating of a loan of \$33,000,000 by an American banking syndicate, the nation pledging as security all the shares of the government national bank, a first lien on custom duties, taxes on corporations, mines, and other industries—in fact, just about everything that could be secured. A permanent Fiscal Commission was set up to manage Bolivia's finances, composed of two North American representatives of the bankers and one Bolivian.

The requirements on this loan were so exorbitant that in 1926, for example, out of the country's total revenues of \$14,943,000, 65 per cent was pledged to the service of the loan. In 1926 an additional loan of \$9,088,200 was secured from Vickers-Armstrong for purchases of war material in England, the annual cost of carrying this loan being \$1,440,000. In spite of all this, Dillon, Read and Company of New York floated another loan in 1928 for \$23,000,000. And today, nearly two years after Bolivia has suspended service charges on these loans, she is able to buy all the munitions

and hire all the foreign fighting men needed to push the war to settle the century-old dispute over the Chaco swamps.

Behind the Leticia affair is a similar story of dictators, loans, and ambitions. Bolivia's next-door neighbor, Peru, was ruled by Augusto B. Leguía from 1919 to 1930. He increased the public debt in the first ten years of his regime from about \$10,000,000 to \$111,387,000. And after that several additional loans were floated, for one of which a New York banking house paid a "commission" of \$415,000 to the dictator's son for his influence. Leguía fell in 1930. Peru found it impossible to pay her debts, and service charges on loans were suspended. The two principal candidates for the presidency to succeed Leguía were the military leader of the revolution, General Luis Sanchez Cerro, and the former student leader, Raul Haya de la Torre. The military leader was elected president. Soon the old procession of liberals toward the prisons and exile, started by Leguía, was resumed. De la Torre was arrested and is now in solitary confinement in a Peruvian prison, as are many other political prisoners. A cablegram received last week by the International Committee for Political Prisoners in New York states that 6,000 political prisoners in Peru have declared a hunger strike. There are indications of considerable opposition by the liberal element in the country to a war with Colombia over a far-away jungle town.

Among Leguía's few real contributions to his country's welfare were the solution of the Tacna and Arica question and the settlement of the boundary between Peru and Colombia. The latter was announced in 1922 through the Salomon-Lozano treaty. The territory involved was the Amazon jungle in the region where Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia have since colonial days had holdings which were undefined until recent efforts at settlement gradually succeeded. But territorial or any other settlements made by Leguía are not popular at present. Many protests have been made against those settlements; it is asserted that they are not legitimate because they were made without the country's consent. So when a band of Peruvian adventurers captured the little town of Leticia in Colombia within territory recently claimed by Peru, the Peruvian government endeavored to make of the incident a patriotic issue, appealing to the internal opposition to unite in defense of the national interests. Instead of apologizing to Colombia and withdrawing these self-appointed conquerors, the Peruvian government began to raise funds to purchase fifteen bombing planes and concentrated forces near Leticia.

At the same time the Colombian government under President Olaya Herrera, which is having by no means an easy time in dealing with its own foreign creditors, seems not averse to using the same rallying cry of patriotism to head off the opposition party. Bristling with righteous indignation, the government has plunged into preparations for war. It has floated an internal loan of \$10,000,000, bought a number of aeroplanes, and put them in charge of German aviators. Several merchant ships have been equipped with cannon and dispatched around the Caribbean and Atlantic coast to the Amazon and up that river 2,100 miles, to meet the Peruvian forces which are concentrating to protect their fellow-nationals in Leticia. Peru is counting particularly on her air force, organized by an American Naval Mission several years ago, augmented of course by as much new equipment and other war machinery as she can buy from us.

In the meantime Brazil, the most deeply concerned neighbor, is leading in an endeavor to settle the dispute through peaceful means. Brazil proposes to accept Leticia from Peru and hand the town back to Colombia. Peru wants Brazil to hold the town while a new treaty is negotiated. But Colombia says the ownership of Leticia is clear and cannot be arbitrated. Brazil is also unwilling to hold the town during long doubtful negotiations, since it would entail maintenance of an expensive armed force in the disputed territory. The United States and other nations have backed Brazil and are putting considerable pressure on Peru to cease preparations for war. But as was feared, with the armed military, naval, and air forces of both Colombia and Peru concentrated in the territory around Leticia, the first encounter in another undeclared war took place on Tuesday, February 15.

Contrary to general opinion, international wars in South America have been few, the last one being the war between Chile, Peru, and Bolivia in 1879-81. The only one before that, barring those connected with the liquidation of the revolutions against Spain, was the war against Paraguay waged by Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay from 1865 to 1870. But today the whole continent is threatened because of the undeclared war between Paraguay and Bolivia over the Chaco, and the mobilization of the forces of Peru and Colombia over the Leticia incident. The Latin American nations since the beginning of this century have generally settled by arbitration serious disputes with their neighbors, but South America now lacks the idealistic drive it had when Argentina and Chile settled their boundary dispute in 1904 and erected the

"Christ of the Andes" to commemorate the treaty of peace.

What has become of Pan-Americanism? In the past few years, while talk of Pan-American fraternity has been at its highest, Bolivian conditions have encouraged the building up of military strength sufficient to take the Chaco. Now the Neutral Commission set up hastily by the American nations in Washington finds it asks in vain for peace. Opinion in South America is practically unanimous that much has been lost by the insistence that the peace negotiations be conducted in Washington, rather than near the scene of discord. This accounts for the meeting on February 1 at Mendoza of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Argentina and Chile, with the announcement that in the future South America would settle her own affairs without the help of the United States.

In a crisis like the present there are divided councils. The Pan-American Union is not permitted to discuss political questions. Yet the League of Nations, organized for this purpose, is not allowed to offend the United States by attempting to keep peace among American nations, as it does with its other members. The specially set up commission of neutrals called at Washington finds itself unprepared, lacking in prestige, lacking in the power that comes from permanence, and lacking in experience. The Kellogg-Briand Pact was not signed by Argentina and Brazil; so the two strongest South American nations are not particularly interested in it, even if there were machinery for its enforcement. The American ideal of peace is breaking down before the rather simple questions of the Chaco and Leticia. A whole new organization and coordination of American peace efforts is imperative.

The South Goes Legal

By HELEN BOARDMAN

"IF they had caught Crawford at the time," said Brigadier General William Mitchell, "there would have been a burning." It was in Loudoun County, the famous fox-hunting country of Virginia, land of magnificent estates and palatial residences occupied, for the most part, for only a few weeks each year. I had been sent by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to investigate and report on certain aspects of the Ilsley murder.

Mrs. Agnes Boeing Ilsley was a charming and popular widow, a member of the fox-hunting set, who lived in the village of Middleburg. She was a woman of forty and her brother Paul, twelve years her junior, lived with her. Paul Boeing was tall and slim, and a sartorial exquisite. He was very dark, with dark eyes and black hair, "patent-leather" hair, smooth and shining. While Mrs. Ilsley was well loved by the village people, her brother kept distinctly aloof, choosing his friends among the rich. The two were fond of each other, their only disagreements being over money. Mrs. Ilsley's income ran to thousands, not hundreds of thousands, and the young brother was reputed to be extravagant.

The Ilsley home, a brick house of some twenty-five rooms, fronts on the main street of the village. It is surrounded by pleasant lawns and gardens and at the back, facing a rear street, is the chauffeur's cottage. On January 12, 1932, Mrs. Ilsley, her brother, and a maid were living in the chauffeur's cottage. The big house had been rented to

the daughter of Mrs. Ruth Hanna McCormick, but she had moved out and on that night it was empty. It was to guard against possible intruders, Paul Boeing afterwards said, that he spent the night in a third-floor room of the big house, leaving his sister and the maid, Mina Bruckner, alone in the cottage. Mrs. Ilsley was an ardent anti-prohibitionist. She went to a meeting that night at General Mitchell's home to discuss the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment. She drove her own car home, after a cheerful goodbye to her friends. It was the last time they saw her alive.

At nine o'clock the next morning Paul Boeing hurried down the main street, a coat thrown over his pajamas, and went into the bank. Stammering out his incoherent story, at last he made it clear. He had found his sister brutally murdered in her bed, and her maid also, both killed apparently with a hatchet. In a chattering state of hysteria he was taken out to the Hitt estate (Mrs. Hitt is the daughter of Senator Elkins and a close friend of Alice Roosevelt Longworth), where he was carefully guarded and protected against reporters. General Mitchell dominated the scene, directing, suggesting, questioning. Onlookers crowded about, buzzing with suspicion and surmise. There had been no robbery. Jewelry and money were untouched. Who could have done it? It must have been a nigger. Then the cry arose, "George Crawford! Get George Crawford!"

George Crawford was a young Negro of perhaps twenty-

seven years. About the year 1925 he was living with a sister, his only relative, in Richmond, Virginia. There he was arrested on a charge of receiving stolen goods. He was convicted and sentenced to nine years. Perhaps Virginia was short of labor. Anyway, Crawford served in the chain gang five years. Then he became a trusty and afterwards acted as chauffeur to the warden. One day one of the convicts suddenly went for the warden with a knife. George entered the building just in time to see it. Risking his own life he leaped at the convict in time to deflect though not to stop the blow. The warden's throat was cut. Crawford carried him out to his car and drove at top speed to Dr. Holt, the prison doctor. The warden's recovery, Dr. Holt testified, was due to the presence of mind of George Crawford. For this act he was pardoned by the Governor in November, 1930.

Learning that Dr. Holt was living in Middleburg as general practitioner, Crawford went to see him there. The visit resulted in his being employed by Dr. Holt in January, 1931. Dr. Holt had rented and was then occupying the chauffeur's cottage on the Ilsley place. Sometimes Crawford drove Mrs. Ilsley's car for her or did some odd job. He did not sleep on the place, but stayed in a building on the main street, next to the drugstore. In the evenings he sat on the steps in front of the drugstore and gossiped with white men of his age. "A nice boy," one of them called him later, "if he had been white we might have been chums."

One night that spring a store in the village was broken into and some merchandise—chiefly cigarettes—was stolen. Once a jailbird, always a suspect. George Crawford was arrested and questioned. As there was no evidence against him, after a severe grilling he was released. Late in the summer some whiskey was stolen from the Ilsley house. Again, for no adequate reason, Crawford was accused. But again for lack of evidence the case was dropped. Twice was enough. Crawford was tired of being blamed for others' misdeeds. He was saving up the six dollars a week he received, together with stray tips. About the middle of September he left Middleburg and went to Boston, and with him went Mrs. Bertie De Neal, who left her husband and children to accompany him. This was indeed a scandal, and one which the colored people of Middleburg resented. Bertie De Neal stayed with him for some weeks, but finally, homesick and unhappy, she returned to Middleburg early in December, 1931, leaving George in Boston.

On Christmas Eve the Ilsley place was robbed. The house was not ransacked. From many valuables which might easily have been taken, the burglar selected a wrist watch which had belonged to the late Mr. Ilsley and several Christmas presents which had not been taken from their wrappings. George Crawford had gone to Boston. For several months he had not been seen in Middleburg. But from force of habit the blame was put on George. Just three weeks after this came the murder, and habit again asserted itself. To the excited minds of Mrs. Ilsley's friends it was quite clear that Crawford was the murderer. Poses were formed. Windy Hill, the colored section, was searched with minute thoroughness. The chase widened, taking in the countryside. A reward was offered. It was increased. But Crawford could not be found.

During the weeks of the hunt, which stretched to months, no other theory appears to have been seriously considered. One Negro, the furnace man, was closely questioned

and released. Bertie De Neal was held for months in the county jail at Leesburg. Eventually the country was combed from Boston to Florida for a year without finding the missing man. On January 12, 1933, exactly a year after the crime, Crawford was discovered in Boston. As Charlie Smith, a name chosen by Bertie De Neal, he was one of the thousands of Boston's unemployed. After Bertie left him he had spent his days looking for work, sleeping at night in a basement. Finally he was picked up in suspicious circumstances by a policeman, and finger-printed. An enterprising young officer discovered that the fingerprints were identical with those of George Crawford, wanted in Virginia. Rendition proceedings followed, a hearing being held before the Assistant Attorney General of Massachusetts on January 25, 1933. At this hearing the State of Virginia produced three witnesses who testified to having seen Crawford in or near Middleburg in January, 1932. The State also offered an unsigned confession which Crawford was alleged to have made to County Attorney Galleher of Leesburg, Virginia. The hearing was adjourned, to be continued on February 7, 1933.

On January 28 I went to Middleburg, stopping on the way at Leesburg, the county seat. The county clerk told me there would be no trouble when Crawford was brought back. There can be no lynchings in Virginia, he assured me, because there is a law against it. There have only been twenty-six lynchings there in thirty years anyway. But the Leesburg jail is a flimsy structure. It might be safer to put him in Alexandria. Arrived in Middleburg I walked up and down the two blocks constituting the business section of the village, stopping at shops, garages, and filling stations, the drugstore, and the Sandwich Shoppe. The proprietor of one of the first shops, when asked what would be the chance of any demonstration against Crawford if he should be brought back, replied: "Now? Not a bit. Nobody wants any trouble. At the time? Well, at the time, gosh, yes! Why, that night everyone in Middleburg was armed. Say, there were so many guns on the street it wasn't safe to go out! But not now. A year is a long time and you get calmed down. Now I guess everybody wants him tried legally. Sure, he'll be convicted. He did it, all right."

"I don't know," said the next man. "The longer they keep him in Boston the more excited people get. I hear a lot of talk and they're getting hot under the collar, the way Boston's holding him back." "He did it," said many. "That is sure. They've got fingerprints to prove it." This is a common misunderstanding. No fingerprints were found. There was one man, however, who said: "Well, I'm not so sure Crawford did it. There's only circumstantial evidence. If you ask me, there's a lot in that case no one knows—a lot is being covered up. But he'll be convicted, that's sure."

Brigadier General Mitchell and Mr. Hitt, whose estate is near Mitchell's, Mr. Sands, the bank president, and Mr. Luck, the mayor, hope to avoid mob violence. They want a speedy, orderly trial. It will be a big occasion with a large attendance. Loudoun County wants law and order, a "fair" trial, and, of course, a conviction. They all know there would have been "trouble" (no one likes the word lynch) if Crawford had been found during the weeks following the murder, but that feeling is quiescent now.

As justice of the peace, Roy Seaton was one of the first persons on the scene of the murder. He has rooms in the village, in the building next to the post office. He is a

thoughtful man, and not content to follow the mob. For one thing, he is not satisfied with the local way of dividing up between the "common people" and the "high hats." Only by currying favor with the "high hats" can the commoners live. There seems to be no such thing as justice. Take the Crawford case. "Why, that nigger doesn't stand a chance," said Roy Seaton. "The rich people are against him and they'll send him to the chair. That's all right—if he's guilty. But if he isn't guilty—well, he doesn't stand a chance."

"If folks would dare to say what they think," remarked more than one of the village people, "I reckon you'd hear plenty about why they want to get Crawford. Ain't it true that if they convict him no one else can be accused? That's what I hear. Well, in that case they don't want a lynching. I'm sure going to be there when they bring him back to Leesburg, though. There'll sure be a big party to meet him!"

"They do love a nigger in Boston," said a local editor. "We'll get him, though, and put him in the chair, I hope."

I quoted these opinions at the hearing before Assistant Attorney-General Stephen D. Bacigalupo in Boston on February 7. J. Weston Allen, former Attorney-General of Massachusetts, and Butler R. Wilson of Boston were retained by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to represent the defendant. After my testimony, which lasted for three hours, there followed a series of witnesses who furnished a complete alibi for Crawford. They were employers, landladies, friends, and associates who produced among them a consecutive account of Crawford's movements from the time he arrived in Boston in September, 1931, until his arrest in 1933. Emphasis was placed on the period before and after the crime, which occurred on January 12, 1932. All the witnesses testified to Crawford's extreme poverty and to the fact that at no time previous to February,

1932, did he have enough money to be able to leave Boston.

The dramatic moment of the day came with the appearance late in the afternoon of the last witness for the defense. This was a good-looking Negro youth of eighteen, who gave his name as Irving Washington. He testified in a straightforward, convincing manner that he had slept with Crawford in the boiler-room of the Hutchins undertaking establishment every night for three weeks beginning not later than January 7, 1932. His testimony could not be shaken, although the Virginia attorney leaped halfway across the table at him in a furious attempt to break him down.

The hearing was adjourned at the conclusion of this testimony until the following morning, when it was resumed at the Charles Street jail. Crawford was put on the stand as a witness. Mr. Wilson examined him chiefly on the alleged confession. He went over it point by point and the witness explicitly denied having made it, and described the attempts of the officials to bully him into admitting prepared statements and later the efforts to make him sign a paper he had not read. His account of his movements in Boston tallied with the testimony of previous witnesses. In cross-examination the Virginia attorney illustrated what Crawford, in his account of the attempt to obtain his signature, had described as "looked like he's goin' to jump right *through* me!" But the witness, never losing his gentle respectful manner, steadily denied the confession.

On February 18 Governor Ely issued a warrant for the extradition of George Crawford. On the same day Mr. Wilson applied for a writ of habeas corpus. It was issued on February 27. The case will be heard on its merits on March 13. George Crawford's fate is still uncertain. Meanwhile, another very grave issue is raised. Is the South learning to use a new, and legal, procedure?

The League Acts

By ROBERT DELL

Geneva, February 12

AT the beginning of this year the League of Nations seemed to be in a parlous state and even its most devoted adherents were tempted to despair of it. Its reputation was gravely compromised by its weak attitude toward Japan, which for sixteen months had been contemptuously flouting the resolutions of the Council and the Assembly and violating the engagements entered into by the Japanese representatives at Geneva. The Disarmament Conference had sat for nearly twelve months without producing any result and the prospects of its achieving anything of importance seemed remote. It is pleasant to be able to record a marked change for the better, at least so far as the Manchurian question is concerned.

The final solution of the Sino-Japanese dispute is still far off and the action of the League in the matter will no doubt be prolonged for many months, but we know already what the final solution will be. In the not very distant future the Japanese will have to accept a settlement of the Manchurian question on the lines of Chapter IX of the Lytton report. They would have been wiser to accept it now when they could have negotiated in conditions much more

favorable to themselves than they will ever get again. The Japanese have shown in this affair that, intelligent as they are, they are not good diplomatists. They have overreached themselves and badly miscalculated. They were, of course, encouraged to be arrogant and uncompromising by the lamentable weakness of the European Great Powers at the outset and, indeed, until the end of last year.

The contemptuous attitude of the Japanese delegation here toward the League, which Matsuoka could not conceal even in his speeches before the Council, showed their conviction that the European Great Powers would never agree on any course distasteful to Japan. In particular they counted on the continued support of the British government. Although it was evident three weeks ago that there was a change in British policy in this matter, the Japanese could not believe it possible that Sir John Simon would desert them. Even on the evening of January 20, the day before the Committee of Nineteen appointed by the Assembly decided to proceed to the report stage under Paragraph 4 of Article XV of the Covenant, Matsuoka's illusions on this point were so strong that he was still convinced that the conciliation procedure would go on.

The most important factor in the welcome change in the attitude of the League has been of course the complete shift in the policy of the British government. Among the causes of that shift were American pressure, the fear of a Chinese boycott of British goods, English public opinion, and, no doubt, tardy recognition of the fact that British interests in China are much more important than British interests in Japan. British support of Japan in this matter has always been incomprehensible, and I have not yet met anybody either in British official quarters or outside them who could give a reasonable explanation of it. I am now inclined to think that the British Foreign Office was not primarily responsible for it and that it was merely part of the Tory tradition which Ramsay MacDonald inherited when he became Prime Minister of what is in fact a Tory government. Undoubtedly the conduct of the Japanese themselves has contributed to the conversion of the British government. They tried to compromise Sir Eric Drummond and Sir John Simon successively by falsely representing them as having gone behind the backs of the Committee of Nineteen and having suggested changes in the texts adopted by the committee. Even so lately as ten days ago the Japanese circulated an absurd report that Sir Miles Lampson, the British Minister to Nanking had suggested to the Chinese government that the Manchurian question should be taken out of the hands of the League of Nations and settled by direct negotiations between China and Japan at Nanking or Shanghai. Moreover, the Japanese put up the backs and exhausted the patience of all the members of the Committee of Nineteen by constantly making obviously unacceptable proposals the purpose of which was clearly to gain time, and by resorting to every sort of equivocation and subterfuge.

Should the Japanese consent to negotiate on the lines that will be laid down by the Assembly, the League would have won a great triumph. It is the general opinion here, however, that the Japanese will refuse to negotiate, that is to say, will refuse to comply with the recommendations of the report made by the Assembly. In that case, if China agrees to negotiate, the only consequence under Article XV of the Covenant will be that members of the League will be bound not to go to war with China. China, however, will have the right under Article XII to declare war on Japan three months after the adoption of the report by the Assembly, and any members of the League will be justified in taking action if they please in support of China. Moreover, by Article X of the Covenant, which has also been invoked by China in its appeal to the League, it will be the duty of the Council to advise upon the means by which the obligation of the members of the League "to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity" of China shall be fulfilled. For the continued presence of Japanese troops in Manchuria after the formal declaration of the League that Manchuria is Chinese territory will be a violation of Article X. It is at least a tenable opinion that it would automatically involve the application of "sanctions" to Japan under Article XVI. It is a still more tenable opinion that Article XVI will come into operation if the Japanese invade Jehol, and they seem to have begun the invasion already. The Japanese have no special position and no special rights in Jehol and cannot therefore make the excuses that they made for their action in Manchuria. Their contention that Jehol is part of Manchuria and therefore under the sovereignty of the puppet

government of Manchukuo is unworthy of serious consideration, apart from the fact that the League has now declared that Manchukuo has no legal existence. Article XVI says:

Should any member of the League resort to war in disregard of its covenants under Articles XII, XIII, or XV, it shall ipso facto be deemed to have committed an act of war against all other members of the League.

It has been contended by Sir John Simon among others that a nation cannot be held to "resort to war" unless it formally declares war, but it seems improbable that many jurists will take this view, which makes nonsense of Article XVI and, indeed, of the whole Covenant of the League. If it were accepted, it would be possible for any member of the League to make war with impunity by abstaining from formally declaring it.

In any case, many members of the League are determined that this question shall be settled, and it is quite within the bounds of probability that within a certain period, perhaps six months, the question of applying Article XVI to Japan will have to be taken into consideration. Should it be applied, all other members of the League will be bound immediately to subject Japan

to the severance of all trade or financial relations, the prohibition of all intercourse between their nationals and the nationals of the covenant-breaking state, and the prevention of all financial, commercial, or personal intercourse between the nationals of the covenant-breaking state and the nationals of any other state, whether a member of the League or not.

It is the duty of the Council in such a case to organize armed intervention against "the covenant-breaking state," but it is left to each member of the League to decide whether or not to take part in such an intervention. In view of the very unsatisfactory economic and financial situation of Japan and the necessity of importing nearly all the raw materials essential to Japanese industry, cotton in particular, the severe economic and financial boycott prescribed by Article XVI would probably be effective without any resort to armed force. It would be quite impossible for Japan to hold out long against such a boycott.

Naturally the cooperation of states not members of the League of Nations, and of the United States in particular, would be necessary to make a boycott effective, but it seems to us here hardly possible that the United States could refuse to cooperate if such action became necessary, in view of the pressure successfully brought by the American government last month on the British and French governments to induce them to adopt a firmer attitude toward Japan. It is possible that the question of expelling Japan from the League under Article XVI will also be considered sooner or later. There is a growing feeling here that a state with a permanent seat on the League Council cannot be allowed to defy the League indefinitely and remain a member. Should the Japanese government give notice of its intention to leave the League, the expulsion of Japan might at once be proposed. But we hear no more at present of Japanese threats to leave the League, no doubt because the Japanese have discovered that they no longer frighten anybody. The League has called the Japanese bluff, and the salutary effects of its action show what would have happened if the bluff had been called in September, 1931.

In the Driftway

PRIVATE property, not so long ago, was one of the major deities in the great American religion whose high priests officiated in Wall Street. Now it has fallen upon evil times. Like most deities it was worshiped and propitiated as long as there was anything to be got out of it. Now that rents have fallen below fixed charges, the temples are crumbling into decay and the low priest on the beat closes his eyes to the looting by the populace.

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THE Drifter is not indulging in fantasy. He is generalizing from a phenomenon now in process in the middle of New York City. On East One Hundredth Street between Second and Third Avenues, within a few blocks of a police station, three six-story apartment houses are being demolished bit by bit by the poor inhabitants of the neighborhood. The owner, it seems, disappeared last summer. The mortgagees have lost faith. The plumbing and lighting fixtures were long ago torn out and sold to second-hand dealers in declining civilizations, and the woodwork in appropriate lengths is feeding the stoves of slum-dwellers. Two of the buildings are on the point of collapse. In the other a few Negroes still live. The picturesque account of one of these remaining residents is also vivid:

Don't nobody seem to care. The city come along and shut off the water, and then the gas company come along and shut off the gas, and the electric light company come along and shut off the lights.

I goes up the street for a bucket of water, and I sees at night with an oil lamp. Ain't no sanitary what-you-calls-'em. But people ain't got no money don't care. If I don't get no money I stays here from now on until I get some.

* * * * *

IT is recorded in Hodgkins's "Italy and Her Invaders" that Rome overnight became a city without water. The aqueducts were destroyed one fateful evening and never restored. From that day forward, presumably, dust gathered in the "sanitary what-you-calls-'em" of the imperial city. Moreover, the sack of Rome was in part the work of its own citizens. According to Dyer's "History of the City of Rome," the inhabitants of Rome were themselves its principal despoilers. Emperors and popes, as well as private individuals, were not above carrying off anything that struck their fancy from stately columns to decorative bronze tiles, while metal was often extracted by thieves.

* * * * *

THE Drifter does not think that the disintegration in East One Hundredth Street or the tearing down of buildings in big cities in order to reduce property taxes is the beginning of general decay. But he confesses to an old fondness for the perfection of Cassandra's gloom. He finds a certain cosmic satisfaction in the reflection that depressions do not necessarily end, that the decay of American civilization is not impossible, and that history could no doubt withstand the shock.

THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

Tammany Corners Relief

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

During the last snowfall in New York City, more than a thousand unemployed men stood in line at one of the district headquarters of the Department of Sanitation from four o'clock in the morning until ten, in the hope of getting temporary jobs. Some were hatless, others coatless and rubberless; without exception, they were cold, fatigued, and miserable. It had been reported that the Department of Sanitation could not handle the snowfall with its regular force; and Dr. William Schroeder, Jr., chairman of the department, had stated in a syndicated article that he had given orders that "the first in line be hired in every instance."

After suffering long hours of exposure to snow and biting wind, and the frequent ministrations of impatient nightsticks, the applicants looked on while officials singled out individuals not in the line but loitering unmolested outside of it, and gave them jobs. Moreover, at about eight o'clock more than a hundred men, obviously fresh from sleep and breakfast and adequately outfitted for a day's work, arrived in a body. They were met without delay by the same officials, who led them to the door of the office over the protest of the men in the line, and gave them shovels and time tickets at fifty cents an hour.

Similar incidents are reported to have occurred throughout the city. The newspapers reported that some 18,000 extra men were given work, but it is doubtful that any significant proportion of them came from the ranks of the most deserving unemployed.

New York, February 23

THEODORE MARVEL

The Militant Atheist

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

I was shocked and surprised at Mrs. Heywood Broun's suggestion in your issue of February 1 that *The Nation* suppress advertisements of the *Militant Atheist*. Mrs. Broun is seriously in error when she writes that "the atheist decides that all who hold religious beliefs are fools and liars." I believe it is more nearly accurate to describe the atheist as one who rejects theistic assumptions.

Girard, Kan., February 3

E. HALDEMAN JULIUS,
Editor the *Militant Atheist*

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

In your issue of January 11, I read with interest the advertisement of the *Militant Atheist*, and in your issue of February 1 I read a letter protesting against your publication of that advertisement. Among other things your correspondent questions your "good taste and consideration of your Christian readers in allowing such license in abuse of their church and faith"; and she asks, "Why this mania to take from others a privilege we ourselves do not want?"

The quoted question logically implies that one's voice should never be raised against any idea or movement, however erroneous or unjust, which the protestant himself does not favor. If such a policy had been universally practiced in the past, many vital reforms would not have been achieved. Incidentally, one may justly accuse your correspondent of violating her own theory, for indirectly she protests against atheism, which evidently she does not want.

I object to her protest not only because I earnestly believe in free thought and free speech except such as is positively obscene, but also because I strongly believe that within such limits no subject is too sacred to be publicly discussed. Only by such discussion can truth be ascertained and established.

Boston, February 2

CHARLES C. RAMSAY

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

I should like to thank Mrs. Heywood Broun for her letter with regard to the *Militant Atheist*. I hope it may have some influence. If that outrageous advertisement is to continue I do not see, much as I should miss *The Nation*, how I could allow it to come to me.

Suffern, N. Y., February 2

ELLEN GATES STARR

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

I was deeply pained and grieved to see the prominence you gave to an advertisement of the *Militant Atheist* in your issue of February 1. Your right to print this advertisement is not questioned; your good taste and judgment are now questioned. Why? Because for its sincere, fair-minded, and honest liberalism, and its accuracy in stating facts, I have always respected *The Nation*.

There is a place for a sincere discussion of God, of churches, of religion—such discussion should be honest, earnest, and sincere. I can see no place for appeals to emotion and hate in a magazine that purports to be the medium of intelligent expression for liberal thought. I feel that you have betrayed my confidence.

Pittsburgh, Pa., February 3

JEROME C. WHITE

The Spanish Socialists

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

Allow me to point out a few incorrect implications in Bailey W. Diffie's article on The Revolt of the Masses in Spain, in your issue of February 1. In the first place, the present Spanish government is not a Socialist one; it is a Liberal-Socialist coalition; and as the Liberals believe in upholding capitalism, there are obviously great difficulties in the way of the Socialists, who wish to destroy it and who are the less powerful of the two. In the second place, the Spanish Communists are not connected with the Third International; they belong to the Trotsky opposition and they allowed this to become known even before they won over the Catalan unions from the Anarcho-Syndicalists in 1931. Thirdly, it may be appropriate to remark that of the 2,000,000 members of labor organizations which Mr. Diffie mentions, at least 1,041,539 are clearly not anti-Socialist inasmuch as they belong to the Spanish Federation of Labor, a Socialist organization whose membership has increased fivefold since 1930. It would also have been entirely within the scope of the article to say something about the evidence and not uncommon belief that the uprisings, even forgetting Sanjurjo's openly monarchistic coup, were at least in part instigated and financed by the Monarchists. Finally, readers of *The Nation* may be interested to know that the leniency with which the revolts have been treated, particularly in Catalonia, has been the cause of open accusations that the government secretly sympathizes with those who would overthrow it.

Liberal-minded people, and most radicals, have shown a sincere willingness to give the Russian Communists a chance and to understand the obstacles they are faced with, but very few have shown appreciation of the enormous difficulties the Spanish Socialists must overcome. They have a small, poor country with no natural resources to speak of. They must combat a powerful clergy and aristocracy, prevent the extremist groups from playing right into the hands of the former, and carry on a program of gradual socialization under the noses of increasingly distrustful foreign capitalists who have large investments in the country.

This without even a parliamentary majority. They have never ceased in their Socialist task of "expropriating the expropriators," and though they have proceeded slowly they have never retreated. Are they to be condemned because they are doing this unsensationally? They may not be using the time-honored method of two steps forward one step back in socialization—and one step forward two steps back in individual liberty—but let us at least wait and see if slow-but-steady is not one way of winning the race.

New York, February 2

MELOS MOST

Congressional Salaries

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

In your issue of February 15 you state that Congressional salaries at present are \$10,000 per annum. This should be corrected. Congressmen and Senators at the last session reduced their salaries 10 per cent.

Washington, D. C., February 16

M. COSTIGAN

Consumers' Problems

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

In view of the growing interest in the hitherto much-neglected consumer, Consumers' Research, in cooperation with the New School for Social Research, is giving a course in Consumers' Problems which will deal with consumers' services and commodities by specific brand name and in simple non-technical terms. Its primary object is to consider the quality, utility, and price of goods on the basis of economic and scientific data. The course consists of a series of twelve lectures which are being given every Friday evening at the New School, 66 West Twelfth Street, by D. H. Palmer of the technical staff of Consumers' Research. The course will be of great value to those who cannot afford to spend a dollar unwisely in their daily purchasing. It will also be of particular interest to teachers and students of the new economics of consumption, since this course is the first given in the East which deals with products and firms by name.

New York, January 28

F. J. SCHLINK

Contributors to This Issue

FERNER NUHN lives in Iowa and writes for various magazines.

SAMUEL GUY INMAN, author of "South America Today" and other books on Latin America, is the secretary of the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America.

HELEN BOARDMAN is an investigator for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

ROBERT DELL, Geneva correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, is a regular contributor to *The Nation*.

HOWARD MCKINLEY CORNING is the author of a book of poems, "The Mountain in the Sky."

LAWRENCE DENNIS is the author of "Is Capitalism Doomed?"

MARK VAN DOREN is the editor of "Autobiography of America."

EDWARD DAHLBERG is the author of "Bottom Dogs" and "From Flushing to Calvary."

DOROTHY DETZER is the executive secretary of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

Books, Art, Drama

Mountain Love

By HOWARD MCKINLEY CORNING

How shall I, being true to mountains most,
With them long intimate, be purely wed
To your one-purposed and inviolate bed.
Partial with you will sleep the faithless ghost
Of one who walks in cloud and strangely speaks
With tongues of water; till upon your breasts
The peaks will clamber, until terror rests
Nearer your heart than tears upon your cheeks.
Better to name me for the mountains' own,
And sleep in robes of silk and not in fern.
Be hungry but be whole of self, than learn
A love defenseless to the jealous stone
That carves my body. Let me make denial—
Else you be grieved and both of us be vile.

Bernard's Progress

The Adventure of the Black Girl in Her Search for God. By Bernard Shaw. Dodd, Mead and Company. \$1.50.

A NAKED black girl is converted to the Christian faith by a lady missionary. She takes the admonition to seek God quite literally, and strides off into the African forest with a Bible and a blackjack. She meets first a god who is powerful, cruel, and bloodthirsty, and she tells him so. She meets next an argumentative god, who, nevertheless, fails to explain to her satisfaction why he put evil into the world. She comes then to Micah, who tells her that his god requires nothing of her but to do justice and love mercy and walk humbly with him. She thinks this better, but opines that doing justice and showing mercy is only a small part of life if you are not a judge, and asks what is the use of walking humbly if you don't know what you are walking to? She next encounters a behaviorist who has spent twenty-five years in making experiments on the flow of saliva in dogs; he is of course a complete idiot, and has learned nothing that the black girl could not have told him in twenty-five seconds. Then she comes upon an amiable conjurer, posing on crosses for a sculptor, who tells her that she should love them that hate her. She replies that she does not want everyone to love her and cannot love everybody: besides, that commandment is useful perhaps only once in twenty times, and is not a rule to live by. There is an Arab present who talks of Allah and says that he converts people by the sword. Finally she comes to an old gentleman who looks in the illustration strikingly like Voltaire, and who tells her to give up looking for God and to cultivate a garden. She stays and works, and then along comes a red-haired Irishman who must be Shaw because he is the only character in the book who does not talk like him. She marries him and has coffee-colored children.

The allegory would seem sufficiently obvious, but Mr. Shaw is taking no chances. After the black girl meets the first god a few of the first pages of the Old Testament blow out of her Bible; after she meets the second god more early pages blow out. When the fable itself is finished, Mr. Shaw writes an epilogue explaining it. The point, you see, is that our idea of God has changed. Though humanity unfortunately does not throw the dirty water out of its mind when it takes in clean water, its concept of God has got constantly better. Indeed,

it may be said to have had Mr. Shaw's conception of the Life Force as its secret goal.

There is not a single idea here that could not have been found in Shaw himself thirty years ago. He still feels that it is ridiculous to have an experiment when you can just as well have an epigram. He still feels that a scientist is an ass to want to find out anything for himself when he can much more easily take Mr. Shaw's word for it. He still thinks that his speculations on religion are daringly original, and that the phrase Life Force, when capitals are used, is profoundly revelatory.

HENRY HAZLITT

A Communistic Strachey

The Coming Struggle for Power. By John Strachey. Covici-Friede. \$3.

A WELL-WRITTEN book by a Strachey is not news; but one by a Communist is a literary event. This book has the style and scholastic qualities of Eton and Oxford, combined with the merits which only an idealistic thesis, free from the necessity to compromise, can display. It surpasses the negligible works of American reds and stands well above most of the depression mediocrities of our pale-pink planners. It is a unique experience to read a brilliant Communist who effectively turns against capitalism the weapons of a hard-boiled bourgeois training rather than the passionate maledictions of a pietistic evangelicalism.

Mr. Strachey comes honestly by his ability to envisage the speedy collapse of capitalism and by his will for power to apply socialism today. He comes from a long, very upper-middle-class line which learned the facts of life and the will to command making money in India several generations ago. The family has since had abundant leisure and money to go noble and literary. After a turn as a labor member, Mr. Strachey found that he had no place among working-class laborites who in a crisis would turn to God-fearing bankers for guidance on balancing the budget and maintaining British credit instead of to strong-willed, hard-headed Marxians for leadership toward immediate socialism. Judging from his chapters on Mr. MacDonald and the Crisis, and The Future of Social Democracy, it is questionable whether the chapels, factories, and counting-houses will ever prepare the working classes for realistic revolutionary leadership, though the drill sergeant some day may, as in Russia. It is even doubtful whether most Socialists want capitalistic collapse and a turn at running things, or merely a larger dole. There is no doubt about what Mr. Strachey wants, though there may be some doubt concerning just what steps he and his followers, should he find any, would take to seize power. His book, however, betrays no personal ambition for power but a very genuine attachment to Marxism. He concludes that the intellectual, if he masters the historical movement as a whole, "can have no possible doubt as to the necessity of throwing in his lot with the workers."

The scope of the book is too vast for a brief review. The opening history of the free market furnishes a little-known background for viewing the present situation. The struggle against feudalism and the divine right of kings was waged from the Reformation down through the French Revolution to the middle of the nineteenth century, by which time the victory of the trading classes was everywhere complete. Not freedom or democracy, but wage slavery, internal monopoly, fierce foreign trade competition, and nationalism have been the principal results of this triumph. Mr. Strachey makes short shrift of the laissez faire free traders and their modern antagonists, the mar-

ket restorers and planners, as well as of the three alternatives of maintaining the gold standard with recurrent crises, abandoning it and developing closed economies, or having an ideal super-state with peace and profits.

By the middle of the book—the sections on the Birth of Capitalism, Capitalism Today, and the Decay of Capitalist Culture (containing several chapters of orthodox and penetrating Marxian interpretation of religion, science, and literature)—we are prepared to speculate about the successors to a rapidly dying capitalism under a total abandonment of democracy. It is this abandonment of democracy that Mr. Strachey really relies on most of all for the drive toward communism. Unfortunately, Mr. Strachey dislikes fascism too much to discuss it adequately and gives it only one chapter. After all, fascism, in maturity, is a form of definite state capitalism quite as much as is communism. Mr. Strachey errs in regarding communism as inevitably the only ultimate successor to private capitalism. It may so happen, but it is also conceivable that it may turn out otherwise.

The case for the collapse of capitalism is impressive. The exposition of communism is adequate. The book is a brilliant effort to fit John Strachey and many millions of other important Britishers and Americans, who, like him, are not proletarians, into the idealized scheme of the dictatorship of the proletariat and of an ultimately classless society. But I fear the attempt fails. Moreover, it is not shown that, in the classless society of the Communist millennium, after the dictatorship of the proletariat is no longer necessary for the liquidation of the bourgeoisie, there will not remain the classes of the governing and the governed.

LAWRENCE DENNIS

The Puzzle of a Princess

Pocahontas, or The Nonparell of Virginia. By David Garnett. Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$2.50.

IT is hard enough to know how any princess thinks and feels, but an Indian princess offers special difficulties; and when she is Pocahontas she becomes quite impossible. There is not only the fact that Pocahontas belonged to a race which nobody has been able to understand; there is the additional and incredible fact that she who began her life in the forests of Stone Age Virginia ended it among the streets of Jacobean London—that she who had been the daughter of King Powhatan at Werowocomoco was taken in the days of Ben Jonson to the court of King James and Queen Anne at Whitehall.

Mr. Garnett ought to know this better than anybody, since he has told the story of Pocahontas as a novelist would tell it who, having come to the dead end of his researches into the dates and the deeds of his historical heroine, had then to create, as Mr. Garnett himself puts it in his preface, her “emotions and affections.” And he does know it. He admits that his task has been an “impossible” one—the task, that is, of deciding what it was that Pocahontas felt when she threw herself on Captain John Smith to save him from the executioners; when she visited the stockade at Jamestown; when she was captured by Argall and made a permanent resident of this stockade; when she married Rolfe; and when she first saw London.

Mr. Garnett, indeed, has known the difficulty too well, has seen the problem too clearly. A less intelligent man who was surer that he knew all about Pocahontas might have written a better piece of fiction than this. He would have blundered oftener in the eyes of ethnologists; but his imagination would have had firmer hold of some individual whom he called Pocahontas. Mr. Garnett has produced little more than a figure who represents a race. When she so far departs from her race as to fall in love with aliens—Smith, Rolfe—she is hardly convincing;

and when she is purely the Indian she is so general as to lose definition.

The book is well written, of course, and brilliant in its author's brittle way. But it has little of that truth which we expect from fiction—unless we expect nothing beyond the kind of truth which a novel can reveal about its writer and his age. The revelation in this case is particularly interesting, and I am not sure but that “Pocahontas” will document a generation quite as nicely as “Death in the Afternoon” does. For it is a cruel and bloody book. Mr. Garnett's theory that the Indians practiced torture as a prelude to lust leads him to dwell, perhaps, too long upon too many acts of sadism. The book can be recommended to anyone who likes good prose; it can also be recommended to anyone who hankers to see human bodies cut into scarlet ribbons with all the refinement of primitive art.

MARK VAN DOREN

Erskine Caldwell, and Other “Proletarian” Novelists

God's Little Acre. By Erskine Caldwell. The Viking Press. \$2.50.

ERSKINE CALDWELL has been compared to Henry Fielding, and it is true that his books, “Tobacco Road,” a very original novel, and “God's Little Acre,” a much less gifted one, have something of the gamy flavor of that great eighteenth-century writer, though they have none of his structural ingenuity. “God's Little Acre,” like “Tobacco Road,” is a chronicle of Georgia crackers, of their economic vassalage, slow hunger, and supine lives anaesthetized by inutile hopes. Less a novel than an expanded short story, it has little to recommend it aside from a few highly amusing and picaresque touches and the deft portrait of Pluto Swint.

“God's Little Acre” evokes a half-dozen other “proletarian” novels; and to this whole group what George Saintsbury once wrote of “Tom Jones”—namely, that it lacked a certain height and depth—certainly applies. In the “proletarian” half of “God's Little Acre,” a wholly truncated section, the neglected plantation, firmly and irrevocably reproduced, is replaced by a mill town which is almost preternaturally sepulchral. The striking “lint-heads” are disincarnated specters moving in a quasi-Marxian haze ten thousand feet above Georgia and Carolina—and, for that matter, above all American humanity.

The frenetic desire of Will Thompson to open up the mill, turn on the power, and *make* cloth, which is in direct ratio to his wish to violate Griselda, tear every shred of manufactured garment from her body, sabotage her, as it were, is a strained emotional admixture of D. H. Lawrence and Sherwood Anderson. This apotheosis of dark sex and the humming machine recalls “Beyond Desire.” And “Beyond Desire,” which never transcends desire, and which is so writhing and inarticulate that it makes painful reading, is a stale repercussion of the events of Gastonia and Mary Heaton Vorse's “Strike.” Grace Lumpkin's “To Make My Bread” (awarded the Gorki prize for proletarian literature), whose homespun narrative is inexorably slow from beginning to end, and Fielding Burke's “Call Home the Heart,” whose poetical came-the-dawn prose only succeeds in being coy, are reshufflings of the same material. One would suspect after a reading of these “proletarian” novels that it was a bourgeois fault to be able to write well.

The left band-wagonists, who encouraged the foregoing pogroms against literature, have also acclaimed John Dos Passos the white hope of the social revolutionary novel. However, he is not, as his psalm-singers have said, a more pliant and adept literary technician than either Dreiser or Sinclair Lewis. What

characters has Mr. Dos Passos drawn that are as deeply recollected as Babbitt, Jennie Gerhardt, or even Eugene Witla? Compared with these how attenuated and slatternly composed are the fungous figures of J. Ward Moorehouse, Ben Compton, and Joe Williams! And three months after reading Dos Passos how many are able to distinguish Janey Stoddard from Eveline Hutchins?

Mr. Dos Passos's meretriciously naive vernacular seems poor beside the prose of "Winesburg, Ohio." Dismantle "42nd Parallel" or "1919" of its technical accoutrement—the bleary-eyed camera eye, the newsreels, the superinduced biographical portraits—and what remains? Briefly, a sprawling, perforated narrative, dappled and dimpled with girlish Joycisms, which is as competent as the unheightened journalese of "Dodsworth," one of Sinclair Lewis's worst novels.

For the Modern Library edition of "Three Soldiers" Mr. Dos Passos has recently done an introduction the rattling puerilities and gawkish perambulations of which beggar description. Expressing the dilemma of the modern writer in the following words: "Well, you're a novelist. What of it? What are you doing it for? What excuse have you got for not being ashamed of yourself?" Mr. Dos Passos then vouchsafes a new definition of the novel as well as a nostrum for the Doubting Thomases in the word racket: "A novel is a commodity that fulfils a certain need; people need to buy day dreams like they need to buy ice cream or aspirin or gin. . . . All you need to feel good about your work is to turn out the best commodity you can, play the luxury market, and to hell with doubt." The advice of this Marxist Lord Chesterfield to young authors seems much more like a sales letter addressed to what William James called the hitch goddess Success than a manifesto from a social-revolutionary novelist. Mr. Dos Passos and his left-wing backers ought to know that in a civilization in which novels are no more important than gin or ice cream there is little hope for a deeper culture and none for a revolution. But in literary matters the proletarian cheer leaders have always had the faculty of seeing everything but the obvious. However, it seems to be much more important to be on the band-wagon than to be either right or left.

EDWARD DAHLBERG

Militarist Logic

Inevitable War. By Lieutenant Colonel Richard Stockton, 6th. The Perth Company. \$7.50.

IN "Inevitable War," a bulky volume of 112 chapters, 873 pages, and 51 charts, maps and illustrations, Lieutenant Colonel Richard Stockton, 6th (author of "Troops on Riot Duty" and "The Guardsman's Handbook"), gives us the soggy logic of a militarized mind. It is almost impossible to give any summary of this banal document. The book is written obviously to urge the adoption of a military policy by the United States government, and this is perhaps illustrated by quoting two of the twenty-one points suggested for such a policy by the author in his final chapter.

The navy must be free to seek and render ineffective any enemy fleet, and protect our commerce and foreign policies. Its power of maneuver should not be restricted by considerations of local defense. The army should be considered the backbone of our defense against invasion.

The navy should be strong enough to control the seas in the vicinity of the United States, the Panama Canal, and our insular possessions, be capable of maintaining our national policies and of keeping open the essential lanes of commerce of the United States.

In case you may be lured into purchasing this volume instead of sending a fat check to peace organizations, we herewith offer

a few more of the choice morsels from its incredibly dull pages. Colonel Stockton has discovered a "new type of pacifist" who is very much to be feared. Apparently the good Colonel has heard somewhere that "the pen is mightier than the sword," but we should not accuse Colonel Stockton of such non-military power. We should advise him to stick to the sword. He says of the new type of pacifist:

A newer type appeared shortly after the World War, consisting of authors of books filled with all the horrible and loathsome things of warfare. I have read such books. It has seemed to me that the authors of some of them have been cowardly and low in their viewpoint; that the trouble lay more in the author than it did in the war. Horrible things happen in war; war itself is a horrible thing. Loathsome things happen in war, and war itself is a loathsome thing. We find cowards and degenerates in armies as we find them in civil life. Some authors, above all else, saw that which was horrible and that which was loathsome. I believe, however, that the normal man saw much more in warfare. A few shell-shocked men screaming and yelling were not what impressed me most. That which impressed me was the manner in which the everyday citizen went into the hell of action—though not without fear—and calmly went about all that had to be done just as part of the day's work. The thing that stands out in my memory is not the comparatively few who broke down, but the hundreds of thousands who did not break down until *shot down*. [Italics ours.]

As for disarmament conferences, he has some fresh and alluring suggestions. He of course tries to be big-hearted and kind. Of Dr. Mary E. Woolley's services as a delegate to the Disarmament Conference, he says:

It should be made clear that I do not intend these remarks to be construed as any reflection on Doctor Woolley's services as a delegate. However, no matter how loyal and intelligent the individual, it is unwise for any nation to send militarily uninformed delegates, with pacifistic tendencies, to conferences where nations fight for strategic advantages in the wars to come.

If you want to struggle through more of this sophomoric drivel, you can for the tempting depression price of \$7.50.

DOROTHY DETZER

Shorter Notices

The Provincial Lady in London. By E. M. Delafield. Harper and Brothers. \$2.50.

The London *Saturday Review* declares that Miss Delafield's diaries of the provincial lady, of which this is the second, catch "the heart and soul and mind and thoughts of Woman as she was, Woman as she is, and Woman as she ever will be, please God." Without going to these lengths, it may be said that Miss Delafield has a pretty wit and enough perception of the general in human behavior to hit off Woman and even Man oftener than a good many of her profounder contemporaries. Perhaps the most interesting thing about her style—and that is the most interesting thing about her book—is that it seems to be peculiarly English. Its distinguishing feature is elegant malice—sweet, neat, deft bites taken out of persons who seem real enough to be convincingly bitten but not quite real enough to bleed. There is a very faint note of Jane Austen in this; there is a much louder note of Rose Macaulay. But Miss Macaulay has more iron in her, and Miss Austen more gold. Nevertheless, one does not at the moment recall any American writer who attacks in just this way, and reading Miss Delafield re-

minds one that the tooth of satire may be one of the most delightful of weapons, although preferably when it is advanced against flesh and blood.

The Red Hills. By Rhys Davies. Covici-Friede. \$2.50.

Founding a school is a dangerous business for a Master, as there is nothing like a disciple to bring out one's vulnerable spots. "Red Hills" is so much in the manner of D. H. Lawrence that it reads like a parody. It tells of Iorwerth Pugh, an intellectual young Welsh miner "with a bias toward Russian novels," and how he has an affair with Ceinwen, a blowzy country wench—willing enough to perform the chores of sex for him, but unfortunately unable to discant upon it as is demanded of a Lawrence heroine. How he yearns "to meet a woman with a mind and a good strong body she takes an interest in." How he meets her and mates her, and how they talk happily ever after. Because it is otherwise well written, "Red Hills" proves all the better how little is needed to push Lawrence's hieratic attitude toward sex into the sanctimonious. And sanctimoniousness about the body can be quite as tedious as sanctimoniousness about the soul.

Jealousy. By Norah C. James. Covici-Friede. \$2.50.

Miss James's novel touches upon an intangible but important aspect of feminism—namely, the unequal division of jealousy between the sexes. Her thesis, one may say, is that jealousy is an emotion that the male has preempted as his privilege, and that he exploits it deliberately to secure his possessive domination over women. To relieve women of this subtle disability, two solutions are possible—either to give women equal rights in the emotion of jealousy, or to abolish it entirely as a dangerous monopoly; and it is this latter solution that Miss James puts forward as the better one. Catherine Eagle, whose first husband shot himself because of jealousy, would not consent to marry her next suitor until he had completely renounced every trace and vestige of it. Using the flashback method while she shows us Catherine and Michael engaged in a motor elopement, Miss James reveals how Michael achieved the desired emotional catharsis. Her thesis and solution are more interesting than the characters or incidents in the story.

Nature by Night. By Arthur R. Thompson. Robert Ballou. \$3.50.

Mr. Thompson is a naturalist who has spent many nights in tedious waiting for common nocturnal birds and beasts of England. He writes pleasantly, in the style of the expert amateur, concerning the ways of foxes, otters, shrews, voles, owls, and so forth. The text will prove interesting to those with a taste for its subject matter. Almost anyone will be delighted by the more than 100 photographs. They are admirable examples of what can be done with flashlight, and are beautifully reproduced.

Toward the New Spain. By Joseph A. Brandt. University of Chicago Press. \$4.

Mr. Brandt's book covers the history of Spain from 1808 to 1932. The period to 1875 is fully treated, but that from 1875 to 1932 is very scantily sketched, leaving the reader with the feeling that the book was intended as a history of the First Spanish Republic, and that the coming of the Second Republic caused the author to attempt to include a hasty résumé of the events leading up to it. The book's most serious defect is that it seems to treat the history of Spain as the direct result of what a few men did, and to neglect the economic and social changes both in the country itself and in countries adjoining it, which had far more to do with the trend of Spanish social thought than the machinations of politicians within Spain. Although this is not entirely omitted, the emphasis laid upon it is by no means in proportion to its importance. The author has

strained for far-fetched parallels between the first and second republics, neglecting to demonstrate that the forces responsible for each were entirely different, the first being the work of a few intellectual radicals, with little popular support, while the second was the work of proletarian forces which were non-existent in 1873. He fails utterly to bring out the intellectual growth of the last sixty years in Spain, which made possible the present republic. The first part of the book is very good; it is perhaps the best thing in English dealing with Spain's political troubles in the nineteenth century. As an account of the forces behind the present republic, the book is insufficient but useful.

The War Memoirs of William Graves Sharp. Edited by W. Dawson. London: Constable. 18 shillings.

These memoirs are neither the best nor the worst of the lot produced by our ambassadors who served during the World War. There is a certain unphilosophical clarity about Sharp's mind that gives his written word a quality of candidness which belies his fundamental confusion. It is one of the remarkable accidents of history that of all our ambassadors of the war period, only one was hostile to the country and government to which he was accredited—James W. Gerard in Germany. This naturally contributed a great deal toward emphasizing the current of opinion in favor of the Allies which was early established on other grounds. While far from being as completely in love with a foreign government as was Walter Hines Page, Sharp was yet entirely without objectivity, and Mr. Dawson, editor of this volume, has apparently never heard of the work of the revisionist scholars on war origins. The result is that the informed student reads Sharp's book with constant impatience at the underlying assumptions, though he may admire, distantly, the author's characteristically American lack of sophistication. If there is anything new to be discovered from this volume, it has escaped this reviewer. Some background material on the Sussex incident is presented, and the matter of German prisoners in France is covered in interesting detail. The French politicians and military men are presented as they were evaluated during the war, and not with any very penetrating insight. The book is a footnote to history. Why it was published in England is mysterious, unless it is that the English appetite for political reminiscences is much greater than the American.

Art Revolution in Art

CRITICS bred to believe with Clive Bell that good painting is good art only to the degree that it detaches itself from meaningful subject to emphasize form, design, color, and other purely sensory and technical qualities, and that the only business of a critic is to be a "connoisseur of pleasure" and to "put the public in the way of aesthetic pleasure," must serve up the Forain show at the Grand Central Galleries with routine references to Daumier and Goya and with knowing remarks about the forceful design and economy of line which accompanied the artist's humanitarian rage at the white-slave traffic, the lecheries of courts, the horror of life for the bottom dog. And because Forain chose to "illustrate" and "caricature" up to the year of his death, 1931, while most of his contemporaries were concerning themselves with aesthetic revolutions, his stature as an artist is inevitably pegged down by academic modernism with some observation or other to the effect that he did pretty well in spite of his deplorable insistence on "subject." Which is about like saying that Dean Swift wrote well in spite of being a social satirist.

A good many of the Forain pictures would look very much at home in the current show at the John Reed Club, which includes the work of most well-known living American artists, some of whom are guest exhibitors, and others members of the club. But since the pictures and sculptures in this show emphasize social distress rather than sensory pleasure, a phrase with "propaganda" in it seems to be the correct note. Biddle, Coleman, Davis, Dehn, Hirsch, Pollet, Miller, Robinson, Walkowitz, Benton, our happy Pop Hart, and so on to Zorach, have gone slumming. And will recover their prestige somewhere else.

But as a matter of fact this show is as significant as the historic Armory exhibit which brought the aesthetic heresies of twentieth-century Europe to the United States. Not that the walls of the John Reed Club display a blaze of genius. There are a few sound and vigorous pictures whose signatures were new to this critic: H. O. Hoffman, Ben Kopman, Phil Bard, Chuzo Tamotzu, Anton Refregier, H. S. Strom, Prentiss Taylor, and, not so new, Albert Wilkinson and William Siegel. There are also a few pictures which add a new impressiveness to familiar names: Biddle's Sacco and Vanzetti, Pop Hart's Working People, Siegel's Miner's Funeral, Kathe Kollwitz's Visit to the Hospital, Adolf Wolff's sculptured Working-Class Mother.

Like the Armory show this exhibit is not primarily important as a discovery of individual talents, but for what it means as a point of departure for a kind of art sharply different from the current mode in appearance, idea, aesthetics, and function. There is not a single still life among the two hundred pieces in the show. The shift of interest from things to people is aggressively marked; also the shift from decoration to emotional expression, from sensory pleasure to human anger and pain. There is a change in attitude, too—artists trying, with some self-consciousness and strain but with all their strength, to be common people. These things give the show as a whole a beat of life, a connection with the things uppermost in your mind and mine, provocative and stirring after the discreet isolation of row upon row of tastefully framed apples, bottles, picturesque ladies, and pretty landscapes inclosed within other walls.

This to the credit of the rebels. Against most of them a grave mistake can be charged. Modern art, brought into the world by France and artists of various nationalities living in France, signifies primarily, we have been taught, a divorce from "subject." It has no taste, says Bell again, for "contemporary actualities." But if the history of this development is examined closely, the impulse to be seen within it is fundamentally the same impulse at work in a different way in the rebellion at the John Reed Club. For the feeling in modern art is, and was when it broke away from the academic mode of the late nineteenth century, precisely a taste for contemporary actualities. More than a taste, it was a determination to smash the cage of prescription, convention, and dogma in which artists performed like trained monkeys for the edification and benefit of Victorian morals.

Art, going "modern," left the service of religion, ethics, civic virtue, and domestic duty, and gave its attention and sympathies to science. Hence the emphasis on intellectual pleasure and technical experimentation, the search for method, the insistence on aesthetic discovery. The impressionists repudiated studio formulas and went out to look at light through a spectroscope. Picasso used his mind as a laboratory for inquiry into the mechanics and physics of form. And given a neatly mechanistic world destroyed in vibration and flux by modern physics, then Cézanne follows. But since the break for artistic freedom involved a break with nothing less than a social scheme, the hate and bitterness aroused were out of all proportion to the issues which established convention raised as reasons for its violent attack.

The battle was fought longest and hardest on the most superficial, also most easily intelligible grounds, which can be summed

up in the question of "subject"; and the spokesman for the defense, therefore, devoted much time, thought, and ingenuity to this point, producing an *ex post facto* set of doctrines and a system of aesthetics expressed in the command: Thou shalt not traffic with "subject." Therefore the artist whose intellect and feeling move him primarily in the direction of contemporary actualities is hampered by modern academism precisely as were the moderns of years past; and he rebels, mistaking the issue, by scrapping the store of knowledge and resource accumulated to his advantage in the previous fight and jumping backwards, as have many of the young artists in the John Reed show, to pre-modern methods—most obviously, to Daumier and Goya. But they cannot adequately and movingly paint or carve their time and place in the technical and emotional terms of another age.

Fifty years of intense and active attention to the material nature of the arts have produced a new comprehension of the nature of materials. In painting—form, light, movement; in sculpture—rock, wood, metals, instruments, structure, and rhythm; in literature—rhythm, typography, sound. New techniques and new modes have been developed in each of these arts. It happens in every kind of cultural development that one phase grows faster than another. Our social scheme breaks through our legal system like water through a paper bag. None of our types of theatrical spectacle can use the auditorium at the Rockefeller Center Music Hall to artistic advantage. A painter can command at least three new and powerful methods—impressionism, cubism, *surréalisme*; convention allows him every liberty in manner, but restricts him in matter. Yet it would be easy enough to trace a development of political and social thinking in the pictorial and plastic arts at least, paralleling the development in style: from Cézanne's snorts about "dirty bourgeois" to the *surréaliste* manifesto prescribing "in politics, communism."

This connection between *surréalisme* and social revolution is generally forgotten or dismissed as irrelevant, for though the *surréaliste* mode significantly shifts weight from intellect to emotion and sensitivity, its expression is more often than not highly personal. Utilizing, however, the interests of subject as presented in dreams, fantasy, visions, and other "enlargements" of emotion and sensory perception, it throws wide the doors to personal and collective symbolism, to tragedy and passion in more than personal terms, to heroic connection between what is visible and what is emotionally significant, super-realistic. *Surréalisme*, as Diego Rivera shrewdly pointed out not long ago, is potentially a revolutionary weapon. The motif—hands—which recurs in the work of most *surréaliste* painters is no more accidental than the cross and halo in Renaissance fresco; though perhaps less consciously symbolic.

Inasmuch as a work of art expresses the cultural prejudices of the artist as well as his personal synthesis with the world in which he lives, his work is propaganda. To object that it is not conscious propaganda is almost equal to saying that the artist did not or does not know what he is doing, and this can be true to a degree. But to minimize the aesthetic value of his work with the observation that it has an ax to grind is to force doctrine upon historical fact. For all art everywhere has had an ax to grind; and what expression of human effort has not? To distinguish, therefore, between propaganda and "pure art" on the ground of presence or absence of easily comprehensible content is itself a distinction with an ax to grind.

The thing which distresses critics who use the word propaganda in a derogatory rather than a descriptive way is, apart from the emotional antagonism to the artist's social attitude, the process of fitting a predetermined set of ideas upon a set of forms in themselves not emotionally and aesthetically expressive. It accuses the artist of a kind of pedagogic dishonesty, of having sold himself to a service, of grinding somebody else's ax. In this sense the word propaganda is most clearly synonymous with advertising; as even a Babbitt cannot put his emotions, his senses,

and his intellect at the service of a brand of ham and not produce work aesthetically false. On the other hand, an artist whose heart and head make him a social revolutionist can make posters and banners which, besides being ideologically militant and immediately useful, may be as beautiful and aesthetically sound as any religious or romantic work of other days. We shall have to admit, if we are honest historians, critics, and connoisseurs, that there is room indeed for good art in what we call propaganda. And we must also recognize that in good propaganda there is no room for bad art.

ANITA BRENNER

Films

Dovzhenko's "Ivan"

CERTAINLY the week just passed was one of more than usual strain on the precarious faith of the moviegoer eager to discover new virtues in the cinema art, to defend it against the easy detraction of the sophisticated. It seemed almost as if producers in all countries had entered into some agreement to unburden their least worthy products on a public that was beginning to become rather spoiled as a result of recent triumphs. For "Mädchen in Uniform" and Lang's "M" we have been made to pay with a succession of insipid German operettas which are not the more endurable because of one or two sentimental tunes. After an irresponsible indulgence in the purely aesthetic beauties of Pudovkin's camera work in "Life Is Beautiful" we have been made to suffer through the earnest but unbeautiful *longueurs* of Dovzhenko's "Ivan." And for the statement of renewed confidence in Hollywood's future prompted by such pictures as "Cavalcade," "State Fair," and "Topaze" we have been rewarded by Richard Dix's characterization of the "Great Jasper" at the Radio City Music Hall. Indeed, the only consoling reflection that occurs after such a week is the commonplace one that no department of art or literature is without these intervals of relaxed inspiration, these challenges to our faith. We must remind ourselves that we have no more reason to expect masterpieces every week in this than in any other field of culture—or entertainment.

The impression gains that the Film Forum, one of the two independent film societies which have sprung up in the last month, has not made up its mind whether it is interested in the cinema as an artistic medium or as a vehicle for social propaganda. The choice of Dovzhenko's picture built around the construction of the Dneipirstroi power plant would certainly seem to indicate that the Forum is headed toward a rivalry with the Cameo and the Acme. Although there could have been no reason other than that of social bias for choosing such a badly integrated and indifferently photographed film as "Ivan," the picture is ineffective even as an example of explicit propaganda. The purpose of propagandist art, we are told, is to incite to action; but the snail-like tempo which Dovzhenko uses to unfold his much-too-simplified story-lesson is likely to induce, in an American audience at least, nothing more potent than sleep. Perhaps this retarded tempo was suitable and necessary for the peasant audiences in Russia for which the picture was intended. But the time has come when exhibitors in this country must realize that a drastic cutting is required to make pictures like this one acceptable to an audience whose psychology has been conditioned by the rapid movement and swift transitions of the American movie. The point has been often enough made in the last few years; but so far one has not heard of any central cutting-bureau being established to reduce by two or three minutes at least such scenes as the one in "Ivan" in which a peasant mother is shown walking up an aisle, or the

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one in which the "aesthete" father is made to laugh, not once, but three times, in an increasingly hollow and grotesque manner. It is to be hoped that the Film Forum, along with the other good work that it promises to do in its field, will do something toward the proper preparation of foreign-made films for American enjoyment.

Perhaps such a film as "The Spell of Tatra," at the Little Carnegie, has a special appeal in Germany, where skiing and mountain climbing are very popular; but neither this interest nor anything in its story or photography redeems this "romantic drama of the Carpathians" for an American audience. It follows pretty closely "The White Hell of Pitz Palu" of a few years ago, but fails to extract as much dramatic interest out of the setting as did that picture.

WILLIAM TROY

Drama In Modern Dress

A FEW weeks ago Arthur Hopkins expressed the opinion that our theater was dying of its unimaginative realism. When he added that the lift of poetry and sentiment was the need of the hour, one assumed with mild cynicism that he had something of the sort up his own sleeve, and so, it now appears, he had. But "Conquest" (Plymouth Theater) proves the cynicism misplaced, for it is a strikingly original play written by Mr. Hopkins himself, and it falls barely short of real greatness. Certain defects are, to be sure, obvious enough, and we will come to them. The fact remains, nevertheless, that there is something large and new and heartening in the whole spirit of the enterprise. Indeed, I remember no other occasion during the present season when a serious drama came so near to casting a magic spell, when one had—as one has here—the sense of an atmosphere heavy with matters of real import. However fleeting her visit, the muse of tragedy was with Mr. Hopkins for a time, and there are moments at the Plymouth when one is aware of her thrilling presence.

Oddly enough, the chief virtue of Mr. Hopkins's play is the one which the work of our other serious writers most conspicuously lacks. On the stage, at least, poetry and incoherence have come to be almost synonymous. Our poets are recognized by a certain turgidity, by the sense they give of struggling desperately to say something just beyond them; and in a play like, for instance, Mr. Lawson's "Success Story," one only glimpses the deepest meanings through the smoke of a fire unable to burn freely. But Mr. Hopkins, on the other hand, is beautifully clear. The foundation of his dialogue is a limpid prose, and when it rises to poetry it rises by virtue of a simple, almost classic dignity. There is no rant in his lines as there is none in the characters who utter them, but there is a passionate sincerity and a deep feeling.

The story is frankly the story of "Hamlet" reset to modern conditions. The prince is the thoughtful son of a conscientious manufacturer; the usurping king is a financial manipulator who "merges" the factory out of existence. Even the love of Hamlet for his unworthy mother is treated at full length—this time in frankly Freudian terms—and, indeed, one occasionally wonders how much of the strength of the play is due to a series of situations which three centuries have proved the most inherently interesting ever devised. But it is not really quite so simple as that. Mr. Hopkins's scorn for the rottenness of the financial world is genuine; he gives it an adequate expression through the old fable; and he could not be so impressive as he is if he did not feel with passionate sincerity.

Perhaps it is, however, worth while to point out that the

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PIGEONS AND PEOPLE. Lyceum Theater. Two hours and a half of George M. Cohan in a play by himself. Well worth seeing.
THE LATE CHRISTOPHER BEAN. Henry Miller Theater. Light comedy from the French completely rewritten by Sidney Howard and charmingly played by Pauline Lord and others. All things considered, it is much the most enjoyable comedy of the season.

surprising clarity of the expression and the simple dignity of the characters were made possible by the fact that Mr. Hopkins is returning to something almost forgotten in these later years, to the fact that his concern is with the honor and integrity of the human soul conceived of in terms which even Shakespeare would have been able to understand. I suspect, indeed, that his play will not please "dialectical materialists," despite its attack upon the "capitalist system." They will feel, I fancy, something irritatingly alien in its concern with intangible values, in its assumption that the soul of humanity is the thing to be rescued, and that the integrity of the individual man is the only integrity worth having. But it is because Mr. Hopkins does feel so strongly the importance of such things that his play can have the quality it has. Perhaps only so can a character take on the dignity which makes his fate seem important; perhaps only so can a language raised by its fulness and coherence just a little above the level of ordinary speech be made to seem fitting.

I hinted above that "Conquest" just misses the genuine greatness which at moments it suggests. That is partly because it stumbles occasionally and sinks then to the level of merely didactic prosiness, but it is chiefly, I believe, because of defects in the direction. The actors—Judith Anderson, Raymond Hackett, Jane Wyatt, and Hugh Buckler—are competent players, yet they either could not or were not allowed to pitch their acting to the key of the text. That text is above realism; it obviously calls for a measured and emphatic utterance just this side of actual declamation. Yet it is read, for the most part, in the affected pianissimo made popular by the ultra-smart melodrama, and for that reason it often misses the very effect intended. In the article referred to at the beginning of this review Mr. Hopkins urged that the theater should let the poet in. It looks almost as though he had done so as far as the author is concerned and then slammed the stage door in the face of those who might have realized in the performance his own intention.

The fact remains, nevertheless, that "Conquest" is a thrilling experience just as it stands, and that it brings something back into our theater. We have playwrights like Sidney Howard who show us, with a humorous detachment, what we are; we have at least Eugene O'Neill who can thrill us with the spectacle of emotions just beyond our grasp or understanding. Mr. Hopkins, on the other hand, has something new to this generation: a calm dignity which suggests, if it does not quite reach, the majesty of almost forgotten things. He is more than welcome.

I do not think that the audience at the Plymouth was wholly at its ease, but at the same time another audience just one block away was having a thoroughly good time at "One Sunday Afternoon" (Little Theater). The author of this little comedy, James Hagan, is unknown, to me at least. The comedy itself is simple, unpretentious, and touched with sentiment. But there is also something unaffectedly charming in the story of the dentist who has his old-time rival delivered into the arms of his own dental chair only to discover that he was done an unintentional favor when his girl was stolen away. Perhaps the obvious delight of the audience proves that it has grown weary of sophistication and wants nothing more than a chance to laugh innocently while watching for the pleasant but inevitable happy end. Something, however, must be credited to the beautiful direction of Leo Bulgakov, and something to the very ingratiating performance of a group of actors headed by Lloyd Nolan in the role of the small-town Liliom who didn't get anything he wanted but found out it was just as well. "One Sunday Afternoon" looks like one of those unexpected successes which, after the fashion of "Another Language," will go merrily along for many months to come.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

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